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ANNEX

ANNEX

THE

WORKS

OF

THOMAS SECKER, LL.D.

LATE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

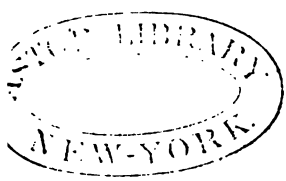
TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

A

REVIEW OF HIS LIFE AND CHARACTER,

BY BEILBY PORTEUS, D.D.

LATE LORD BISHOP OF LONDON.



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CONTENTS

OF

VOLUME V.

SERMON I.

PAGE

[Preached before the University of Oxford on Act Sunday, July 8, 1733.]

DEUTERONOMY XXXII. 46, 47.

And he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day; which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law.—For it is not a vain thing for you: because it is your life; and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it 1

SERMON II.

[Preached on the 30th of January, 1733-4.]

ISAIAH XXVI. 9.

When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness 23

SERMON III.

[Preached November 27, 1737, on the Death of Queen Caroline.]

ECCLES. VII. 4.

The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning 37

SERMON IV.

[Preached before the Lord Mayor, &c. on Easter Monday, 1738.]

1 PETER IV. 10.

As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God 52

PAGE

SERMON V.

[Preached before the House of Lords, on the 29th of May, 1739.]

PSALM CVI. 12, 13.

Then believed they his words, they sang his praise: they soon forgat his works, they waited not for his counsel 72

SERMON VI.

[Preached before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, February 20, 1740-1.]

MARK VI. 34.

And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people; and was moved with compassion towards them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things .. 88

SERMON VII.

[Preached at the Anniversary Meeting of the Charity Schools, May 5, 1743.]

ROMANS XIV. 16.

Let not then your good be evil spoken of 118

SERMON VIII.

[Preached on Occasion of the Earthquake, March 8, 1749-50.]

PSALM II. 11.

Serve the Lord with fear: and rejoice unto him with reverence .. 154

SERMON IX.

[Preached December 30, 1750, on resigning the Rectory of St. James, Westminster.]

2 COR. XIII. 11.

Finally, brethren, farewell 178

SERMON X.

[Preached before the Governors of the London Hospital, February 20, 1754.]

ROMANS XII. 8.

—He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity: he that ruleth, with diligence: he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness..... 198

PAGE

SERMON XI.

[Preached at the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Societies, December 4, 1754.]

MALACHI III. 16.

Then they, that feared the Lord, spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it; and a book of Remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name 221

SERMON XII.

[Preached before the Society for Promoting English Protestant Working-Schools in Ireland, April 27, 1757.

PROVERBS IX. 6.

Forsake the foolish, and live: and go in the way of understanding 245

SERMON XIII.

[Preached on the 5th of November, 1758.]

JOHN XVI. 2, 3.

They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me 270

SERMON XIV.

[Preached October 25, 1761, being the Anniversary of his Majesty's Accession.]

TITUS III. 1, 2.

Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates; to be ready to every good work: To speak evil of no man; to be no brawlers, but gentle; shewing all meekness unto all men 286

Eight Charges delivered to the Clergy of the Dioceses of Oxford and Canterbury, viz.

PAGE

The Bishop of Oxford's Charge to his Clergy in the year 1738 305
1741 332
1747 355
1750 376
1753 406

The Archbishop of Canterbury's Charge to his Clergy in the year 1758 423
1762 447
1766 472

Instructions given to Candidates for Orders after their subscribing the Articles 496

Oratio quam coram Synodo Provinciæ Cantuariensis anno 1761 *convocatâ habendam scripserat, sed morbo præpeditus non habuit, Archiepiscopus*..... 508

SERMON I.

PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, ON ACT-SUNDAY, IN THE AFTERNOON, JULY 8, 1733.

DEUT. XXXII. 46, 47.

And he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words, which I testify among you this day; which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law.

For it is not a vain thing for you: because it is your life; and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it.

THESE words contain the last exhortation which Moses, the great founder of the Jewish state, gave his countrymen, on the very day wherein he had notice of his approaching death. He had freed them, with infinite danger to himself, from Egyptian tyranny, and the worse bondage of idolatry and superstition: he had received for them, from God's own mouth, such laws of life, as in their circumstances were most conducive to virtue and happiness: these he had delivered to his people, established on the surest foundation of regard; affectionate reverence to the object of all duty, and the author of all good; he had laboured, with infinite patience, through a long course of years, to cultivate in them this important principle of religious obedience: and now, drawing near to the close of a life spent in their service, he

recommends it again; first, with the force of a most persuasive eloquence; and afterwards by every charm, that poetry itself could add; setting happiness and misery before them, in an ode of divine sublimity and spirit, which they are commanded by Heaven to learn themselves, and teach their posterity. This therefore he communicates in a solemn manner to the whole congregation, as the conclusion of all his cares for them; and then takes his final leave in the exhortation of the text, confirming once more at his death the importance of those precepts, which he had been giving them through his whole life. *Set your hearts, &c.*

Their own observance of God's law was securing the felicity of one generation only: but educating their children in religion and virtue, this was perpetuating blessings to each part of the society and to the whole: lasting prosperity and peace, in the good land they were going to possess; and in that *better country**, of which it was an emblem, *life for evermore* †.

The words afford then a just occasion for speaking,

I. Of the advantages of right education; and,

II. The duty of endeavouring, that these advantages may be obtained.

I. The advantages, and indeed necessity, of right education.

Other creatures arrive, without their own care, at the small perfection, of which they are capable, and there stop: but the whole of man's existence, that appears, is a state of discipline and progression. Youth is his preparation for maturer years: this whole life, for another to come. Nature gives the abilities to improve; but the actual improvement,

* Heb. xi. 16. † Ps. cxxxiii. 4.

we are to have the pleasure and the reward of giving ourselves and one another. Some minds indeed, as some soils, may be fruitful without cultivation; others, barren with it; but the general necessity is the same in both cases; and in both, the richest, and most capable of producing good fruit, will be overrun, if neglected, with the rankest and worst weeds.

Now the only universal precaution, that can be in this respect, Christianity hath furnished, by introducing a stated method of instruction, unknown before; which, joined with the parent's private care, is, to the generality of mankind, sufficient for the purposes of intellectual and moral improvement. But to persons of more extensive influence, a more particular and appropriated institution is necessary; for the world's sake as well as their own. This, with regard to the teachers of religion, men almost without exception acknowledge: but too commonly forget it in another case, of no less importance; theirs, I mean, whose authority is to inforce the laws of conduct, and whose example to lead the way in life. Here sometimes a wrong care, often an imperfect one, is taken by the fondest parents. The outward accomplishments and decencies of behaviour they teach them with exactness, and do well: but then, without the least further provision, send them abroad into the school of the world, there to learn what they can. The consequence is, what must naturally be expected: trifles and follies, ever readiest at hand, and best suited to the unjudging mind, get first into possession; and, in many, leave place for nothing else to enter. Such, unqualified for the valuable employments of life, must lose their days in the low amusements of a false and effeminate politeness;

hoping for no higher a character, than a set of creatures, equally contemptible, can give one another by mutual admiration; and happy after all, if they chance to preserve an innocent worthlessness.

But suppose room left for some attention to knowledge; not even the forms of decent carriage, though obvious things, are fully learnt without regular application: what sort of acquaintance then with science must that be, which is picked up occasionally and by accident? A thorough one indeed we must judge it, were the first appearance to determine us; that air of sufficiency, with which a person thus educated for the most part delivers his sentiments. But if we examine, as the world will, what is under this appearance to support it; then a mind is discovered, thoughtlessly persuaded of its own knowledge, where it is very ignorant; and affecting knowledge, even though it is conscious of having none: first making hastily whatever determination is fashionable, about questions half understood, and not at all considered, be their importance what it will; and then going on immediately to act upon this determination, without the least diffidence, or the least thought what the laws of human actions are: unmoved by reason, and scorning it; but changing frequently on mere fancy, and fluctuating through life without rule or guide, from the forward extravagances of a profligate youth, to the end of an early and despicable old age.

The benefits of conversation greatly depend on the previous attainments, both of those, who are supposed to communicate knowledge, and to receive it. If therefore instruction be neglected, conversation will grow trifling; if perverted, dangerous. Still acquaintance with the world, however corrupted, may

be an useful part of education; but then it must be the last. It gives a beautiful polish: but of this the best prepared mind will be the most susceptible. It teaches many things: but good or bad, according as the learner is qualified to distinguish. He, whom improved good sense hath enabled to observe upon common practice, will extract wisdom and virtue from the vices and follies of mankind. But such as are ignorant, and capable only of imitating, will of course admire the worst of what they see; and be the more effectually ruined, the more they aim to be accomplished. It is therefore a merciless thing, to throw out poor creatures, unprincipled in what is right, to shift for themselves where so much wrong is to be learnt.

Regular cultivation of the understanding then is what good education begins with. The earliest branch of this, acquaintance with useful languages, unlocks the treasures of ancient learning, and makes the improvements of every age and climate our own. Then the politer parts of literature most agreeably open the faculties, and form the taste of young persons; adorn our disccourse and endear our company, in riper years; give a grace to wisdom and virtue; relieve the fatigue of our busy hours, and elegantly fill up the leisure of our vacant ones. At the same time the art of just reasoning opportunely comes in, to curb the licence of imagination, and direct its force; to fix the foundations of science; ascertain the degrees of probability, and unveil specious error. With this guide we proceed securely. Knowledge of nature opens the universe to our view; enables us to judge worthily of the constitution of things; secures us from the weakness of vulgar superstitions; and contributes, in many ways, to the health and

security, the convenience and pleasure of human life. If from hence we go on to survey mankind; a contemplation of their different states in different ages, and especially of their ancient regulations and laws, the public wisdom of brave and great nations, will furnish variety of useful reflections to the mind: often teaching us to improve our own condition, often to be happy in it.

It must be obvious, how rational an entertainment these things are; and how useful materials they furnish, to ripen and perfect that prudence and good sense, which not only carries us through the business of life, but gives relish and stability to the pleasures of it. If then knowledge ought to be attained, the way to it ought to be made easy; by removing difficulties, cautioning against mistakes, and leading forwards in a right method. Above all, application ought to be secured, by the authority of a prudent instructor; and emulation excited, by a number of fellow-learners.

But if education stop here, it hath only given abilities and powers, the direction of which to right or wrong purposes is greatly uncertain still. He that knows not the proper use of his own being; *what is man and whereto serveth he, what is his good and what is his evil**: may easily employ his other knowledge so as to be much the worse for it. This inquiry then is the important one. Various methods of conducting life present themselves; contradictory inclinations demand to be gratified; the conflict is painful; the end of it may be more so: which way is right, and which shall we take? Now there is a science, that can direct us here: can shew us an inward principle, endued with native authority to govern all the rest;

* Ecclus. xviii. 8.

obedience to which gives a steady aim and self-approbation to our conduct, bestows on us the truest satisfactions of life, and delivers us from its sorest evils. Nor are morals only the source of private happiness, but the great foundation of mutual security, the only one of esteem and friendship amongst men. A person of true goodness, though otherwise of small accomplishments, will always make an amiable figure in society, and be a valuable part of it; whereas, without a virtuous heart, the superior abilities of the great man will only render him a more extensive mischief; and the deceitful agreeableness of the gay man qualify him to mislead, betray, and ruin, more entirely, those with whom he converses. Thus wherever wickedness increases, *will misery increase also; till the end be* universal confusion. For though a constitution, sinking under vice, may preserve for some time the florid look of health; yet inward strength, and lasting vigour, are what nothing but virtue, public and private, can give to any people. This is that true wisdom, *in whose right hand is length of days; and in her left, riches and honour* *.

Now the foundations of virtue are indeed laid by nature, both in the reason and affections of mankind, though fallen: but reason is so often inattentive, and affections are so easily depraved, that without further care, those moral principles, which make the best part of our inward frame, will in most men be greatly obscured, and in some, to all appearance, quite effaced. And, were even those of righter minds left each to form their private system, tenderness for their own failings, or prejudice for those of the world, would often lead them into imperfect notions and wrong practice. One indispensable branch

* Prov. iii. 16.

then of liberal education is an accurate institution in this important science: to pull off the disguises which vice affects to wear, and place the consequences of it in a just light; to point out the less obvious advantages of virtue, and shew its restraints to end in real freedom; to represent the strict connection of its several parts, and make strong the proof, that *knowledge of wickedness is not wisdom; neither at any time the counsel of sinners prudence**.

And when should the science of life be taught, but in the beginning of life; before evil habits are added to original depravity: whilst the natural regard to truth and right, the only inward restraint of incautious youth, remains comparatively uncorrupt; and the seeds of sin lie yet somewhat loose on the surface of the mind; much harder to be cleared away, when once they have taken root, and twisted themselves strongly about the heart? This therefore is the favourable opportunity, in which authority and reason must exert at once their joint force. For discipline without instruction is mere tyranny: and instruction without discipline, little better than useless talk. Things owned to be fit and good are neglected, because disagreeable; things evidently hurtful pursued for present pleasure. Here authority comes in to the aid of reason; enforces virtuous application; restrains vicious indulgences; tempers the warmth of youth; prepares us for the future subordinations of life; conducts us safe through the unseen dangers of our most dangerous time; and then by gentle degrees withdraws its influence, as the power of self-government grows up. Where want of this care leaves young persons too soon in the worst of hands, their own; it

* Ecclus. xix. 22.

is dreadful to see, into what irretrievable miseries they plunge, in the very beginning of their course. And therefore the more liberty they are afterwards to enjoy: the more prudent, though not stricter, restraint they should be under at first; and entered by slow steps into the world at large, with all possible cautions given them of the hazards they are going upon, and (God knows) have little reason to be eager for.

But the most serious part of education is wanting still: the part which leads us, by the esteem of moral excellence, to honour and love that Being, in whom the perfection of it dwells; and extends our inward sense of duty, suggested first by the low and short-lived relations between us and our fellow-creatures, to the highest possible and eternal object of it, the Creator and Ruler of this universe. He, by whose pleasure we are, from whose favour all that we enjoy and hope for comes, according to whose determination our whole existence shall be happy or miserable, is not surely one with whom we are unconcerned. And, however a base nature may value itself on the impotent affectation of slighting God; every worthy mind will delight to express that veneration, and pay that obedience, which are due to him, who is the Lord of all: due by every strongest claim, whether unassisted reason discover the general laws of his moral kingdom; or Infinite Wisdom, the best judge of our circumstances, condescend to adapt to them further obligations. It is indeed the sense of our living under his government and care, that makes our condition of being desirable. Religion, filling the mind with that object which it naturally seeks, a sovereign protector, infinitely wise and good, effectually excludes all superstitious terrors; and, far

from depressing the tenderest spirit, exalts us into every thought and every hope, that is great and noble. Turbulence of passions, and obstinacy of self-will, these are the things, that tear and weaken the soul; reverence of God, by awing them into composure, strengthens every inward principle that ought to be strong; and if it prunes the luxuriances, promotes by so doing the vigour of the mind. Religion comprehends at once every motive, both of virtue and of private interest, that can either direct or support the heart in every part of conduct; joins in perpetual union our duty and our happiness; and makes the universal scheme of things consistent, beautiful, and good.

Surely then, principles of such a tendency ought to have an early and diligent cultivation in every breast; but their's especially, whose rank or profession will make it of the most public consequence. They who object against this care, as instilling prejudices, should consider, that virtue, honour, decency, are prejudices just of the same sort; and think what would follow, were men to enter upon life free from the bias of any one good quality. But in truth, God himself, not man, hath planted these just prepossessions in the heart: and all that education does, is to favour their growth. Religion, and the evidences for it, may indeed be unfairly represented by its teachers: and what part of knowledge may not? But are only the teachers of religion capable of misrepresenting it? Hath not every vicious man as strong a motive to incline him against it, as even those maintained by it have, to incline them in its favour? Hath not fondness of novelty, and affectation of superior sense and learning, as great influence on some persons, as credulity can have on others?

Do we not every day see men determine positively against religion, who are known never once to have thought of it in earnest; and attack it by all the unfair arts in the world, whilst they themselves are declaiming against such arts? Do we not see them even triumph in the thought of its being false, though the everlasting happiness of every good man depends upon its truth? And are these the worthy spirits to whose tutoring young persons are to be delivered over in their native ignorance, for fear of prejudices? Or is it not on all accounts wise and fit, that the mind, whilst untainted with evil communication or vice, should have the most important of all truths confirmed to it by proper arguments; and be formed to the right and happy temper, of cheerful obedience to the greatest and best of beings, *the Father and God of our lives* [*] ?

Since therefore instruction of youth in religion, virtue, and knowledge, appears attended with so many advantages; it follows,

II. That all persons concerned should endeavour with united care, in their several stations, that these advantages may be effectually obtained; especially in the places dedicated to that purpose.

The public care, in this respect, we must ever gratefully own, continued through a long succession of our princes; and flourishing still in its height, under the administration of a king, zealous for the happiness of his people, and resolute to maintain all the rights of all his subjects. Next to whose assured and experienced protection, we cannot but gratefully acknowledge the gracious munificence of his royal consort; therefore bountiful to religion and learning, because she most intimately knows their value, and most affectionately esteems them.

[*] Ecclus. xxiii. 4.

Secure then of the public favour to whatever is connected with the public good; we have only their attention to solicit who are personally interested: parents, or whoever supply their place; the conductors of education; and, the young persons to be educated.

To you who are parents, nature itself hath given a tender concern for your children's welfare, as your own; and reminds you justly, that, as you have brought them into the dangers of life, your business it is to provide, that they get well through them. Now the only provision commonly attended to, of wealth and honours, can never produce happiness; unless the mind, on which all depends, be taught to enjoy them properly. Fortune, without this, will but lead them to more abandoned sallies of extravagance; and rank expose them to more public censure. Education then is the great care, with which you are entrusted; scarce more for their sakes than your own. You may be negligent of your son's instruction: but it is on you, as well as himself, that his ignorance and contemptibleness will bring both reproach and inconvenience. You may be regardless of his morals: but you may be the person, who will at last the most severely feel his want of them. You may be indifferent about his religion: but remember dutifulness to you is one great precept of religion: and all the rest promote such habits, as you may bitterly repent, when it is too late, your omission to cultivate in him; and live and die miserable on his account, whom timely care would have made your joy and honour.

Parents therefore should always be friends to education, and to places of education: should wish well to them; and never, without great reason, think ill of them. The enemies of religion and virtue, an in-

creasing number, will of course be enemies to those who teach them; and the more so, the more carefully they teach them. The enemies to either part of our happy constitution, will look with an evil eye on establishments, designed for the support of both. More private motives will excite injurious treatment of them from some persons. And even those of better meaning may be engaged, by misinformations and prejudices, to pass harsh judgments and say unfriendly things. But reasonable men will always distinguish, by what person, on what grounds, with what temper and what views, disadvantageous characters are given, or reports raised. They will also consider that the unhappy divisions of this nation cannot but have *caused, on all sides, in length of time, some degree of* wrong opinion and wrong conduct towards one another; mutual jealousies and misunderstandings between those, whose interests, and whose intentions, were in general the same: differences, which it must be ruinous to heighten, dangerous to continue, useless to pass judgment in; but most important to reconcile, by such conduct on every hand, as may give no suspicion of ill design, but all proofs of good. Friendly methods will not fail to unite the hearts of men; and make them susceptible of mutual advice and improvement, assistance and benefit. Whoever will view the seats of learning, with these considerations present to his mind, will judge favourably concerning them; and not only admire the pious bounty of our ancestors, who dedicated these delightful retreats to knowledge and virtue, founded these beautiful structures, enriched them with such amazing treasures of literature, and provided so nobly for the accommodation of fit persons to enjoy and communicate the instruc-

tion of them; but be thankful for the many and great blessings, which they have conveyed to every age, and will, we hope, derive to latest posterity.

Ideas of perfection are visionary things: but look into fact, and where will those, who inveigh against the education of our universities, recommend a more improving one? The indulgent softness of the parent's family is apt, at best, to give young persons a most unhappy effeminateness; the governor, if he hath abilities, hath scarce ever authority to enforce diligence; want of rivals keeps the mind languid: and upon the whole, seldom any thing considerable comes out. If now the contrary method be taken, of sending them, raw and uninstructed, to visit foreign countries; what improvement will minds unprepared for improvement make there? As to religion; the disuse of frequenting its exercises, and the daily view of its corruptions, will be in danger of effacing all regard to it. With respect to morals; in the midst of so great temptation, so little restraint, and so general bad example, it must be a high degree of virtue, that can keep itself in countenance. Then for such opportunities of instruction, as different laws, manners, and customs, may be supposed to give; these require a mind trained up beforehand to attention and judgment. On all others they will be just as likely to make wrong impressions as right, if they make any: but indeed what impressions of all kinds are usually made, and how far the improvements brought home answer the national expence for them, lies within the compass of daily observation.

If then, in the next place, we compare at least foreign universities with our own: is their theology worthier of God, more conformable to reason and primitive Christianity; is their philosophy juster and

more solid, less full of imagination and hypothesis; than that of our great countrymen, whose names I need not suggest? Will the ornamental rewards of learning be more fitly bestowed, where no time previous to the application for them is required? Will industry be more universal, without any inspection over it; behaviour more regular, without any rule set to it; than where young persons are formed into orderly societies, distinguished by proper habits, restrained to proper hours, obliged to proper studies, and watched over with continual care? Miscarriages, after all, will happen in such numbers of such an age. But the general good order that reigns here, to most foreigners, not the worst judges in this case, appears incredible when *related*, and very surprising when seen. It remains only to wish, what there never was more hope of; that, as our universities have long excelled all others, they may continually improve upon themselves.

But still, parents must not expect their children's improvement should be great, unless they contribute their own share to it. If indolence and luxury be taught them by bad example, or prejudice against every thing serious and praise-worthy by bad conversation, before they come hither; if they come with little or no charge given about regularity and application, but licence be claimed for them in proportion to their quality; or if, after the mere form of a short confinement here, they are let immediately loose, to wear off by negligence and profligateness, the few slight good impressions that could be made; what room hath the parent to hope for improvement, or complain if none be found?

But let him be careful in his own duty first: then the persons to whom he commits his child after-

wards, will undertake with some comfort an office laborious and important at all times; but particularly so in an age of uncommon corruption; when the expectations of good men are more than ever fixed on their discharging this trust well; and their failure will give bad ones the double joy, of seeing wickedness flourish, and accusing them for it. Complaints indeed of unjust accusations were never better grounded: but complaints alone will do little good; and even deserved returns of bitterness may do much harm. The only remedy is, that *by well doing we put to silence* * the unreasonableness of ill persons, and secure the protection of those who mean well.

The educator of youth therefore will first perfect himself in each needful qualification, and then apply to forming others. In every science he will join the discoveries of later times with such instruction, as may render the learning of former ages intelligible; and prudently direct the more particular attention of each person to such things, as may chiefly relate to their future part in life.

The foundations of religion he will lay deep and strong: recommending the great articles of it, not to the passions of those under his care, by warmth and vehemence; but to their reason and faith, by just explications and conclusive arguments; neither loading revelation with unauthorized doctrines and needless difficulties; nor yielding up the least real part of it, to defend the rest; nor altering the least, to give it a more plausible appearance. A disputing and cavilling temper he will endeavour to repress; but will treat with all tenderness the doubts of an ingenuous mind; and ever encourage that sacred regard to truth, which makes men worthy of esteem, even

* 1 Pet. ii. 15.

whilst they err, and is the great security of their returning into the right way. He will take fit opportunity of shewing how closely a due regard to the teachers of religion and virtue is connected with the practice of both. But the persons, whose employment teaching them is to be, he will studiously warn, that the only way of securing this regard is, by useful and exemplary lives; prudent and inoffensive conduct; and so hearty a frindship to all just and reasonable liberty, as may give them unsuspected authority to oppose the dissolute licentiousness, that in vain assumes its name.

To civil government he will conscientiously teach that dutiful obedience and honour, which Christianity requires all subjects to pay; and which the happiest subjects in the world ought to pay with the cheerfullest gratitude. He will discourage with all possible care, the rage of party zeal; which warm and unexperienced minds too often mistake for public spirit. Admitted in this fair disguise, it possesses the whole man; tinctures his way of thinking on almost every subject; leads him to hate and injure worthy persons, to admire and associate amongst very bad ones; with whom this immoral temper stands in the stead of all merit, whilst indeed it hinders the acquiring of any. As life goes on, these evils increase: of which all the world complains, but unhappily indulges them at the same time; instead of each curbing, on his own side, the eagerness and keenness of so malevolent a principle. Young persons should therefore be reminded, that the seats of learning are purposely secreted from the busy scenes of life; that the time for engaging in those will come but too soon, and meanwhile the generous ardour of

youth should be exerted in making the preparation of useful knowledge and virtuous habits; but ever tempered with such mildness and diffidence concerning matters, of which they need not judge yet, as they will every day see more necessary in order to judge and act right.

This is indeed one part of morals: and on every other part the director of education will have an attentive eye. Even the sallies of a well meant fervour he will prudently moderate, when they give religion a gloomy appearance, or add to it a needless burden. But much more strictly will he guard against the opposite extreme of libertinism and profaneness: labouring to keep up, not only an outward form of regularity, but a serious awe of God, and sense of duty, in every mind; watching over each tendency to vice; and considering wilful neglect of application, as a dangerous kind of guilt. In order to this great end of preserving morals, he will preserve and countenance, as far as it remains possible, that temperance of living, simplicity of appearance, and frugality of expence, which are usually brought hither, and so peculiarly suit this institution; which keep the mind in fit temper for the exercise of its faculties, and defend it from the corruptions of luxury and vanity; lay the foundations of health and prudence in men for the rest of their days, and prepare them to be virtuous and easy in whatever stations may prove their share.

It remains only now, that the person, of whom all this care is taken, should know and improve his own happiness. Too many there are, that set out upon the important journey of life, without a skilful, or perhaps a friendly hand, to conduct them through

the difficulties of the untried and hazardous way. These are greatly excusable in their faults, and pitiable in their miseries. But of you God and man will expect attainments, that may bear proportion to the advantages with which you are blessed. Nature engages your parents: duty, honour, and interest, your instructors, to consult your welfare: which they desire as much as yourselves, and understand better. Restrain therefore and apply yourselves as they direct; though you not only feel it painful, but see it not yet beneficial: and trust those, who have all imaginable claim to be trusted, that, by quick degrees, the pain would wear off, and the benefit be evident.

Their province, who are devoted to the service of religion, will be to appear, perhaps after a very short preparation, in an age strongly prejudiced against them and their function; sure objects, without merit, of contempt and hatred; but, with it, capable still of being esteemed and useful. This situation, you see, requires in the first place, that you carefully acquaint yourselves with the proofs, the doctrines and precepts of the Gospel revelation. Fear not therefore making free inquiry into every thing. Others inquire with bad intention: if you do it not with good, you will want true learning, to oppose against the false and half-learning of unbelievers. Only begin not your inquiry, till you are qualified: and end it not, till you have considered matters thoroughly. Young minds, and often the most generous of them, are apt to pursue truth with an impatience, that occasions their missing it. Nothing ought ever to stand against full evidence, well weighed: but many things may induce those, who have yet had little time for thought, to think again,

and be diffident in the meanwhile. For not only the world too commonly imputes to a man, all his life, the indigested notions of his early years: but persons list themselves by positive talk, and then cannot retreat. With this caution, and with due method, diligence will go far in acquiring knowledge. But knowledge is only one part of what must be attended to. The unguarded conduct, even of persons younger days, will be treasured up in many a malicious memory to their future disadvantage: and, though an affectation of untimely gravity sits ill, yet innocence and piety are the duties of every age. They especially, whose profession will make a stricter abstinence from doubtful and imprudent pleasures expected of them hereafter, will find it much the safest and easiest to begin now; and, by an uniform life, grow regularly up into that esteem, which their destination will require.

And though neither the same diligence of application, nor such accuracy of conduct, may appear necessary in those of higher rank; yet an improved understanding must be an advantage, and the want of it a blemish, proportionably conspicuous, as the station, in which either appears, is public: and the choice, how life shall be spent, is always important in the same degree, as the persons are who make it. Such therefore, of all others, should not take it hastily for granted, that an immoral course is right. To begin with virtue, at least till fair inquiry rejects it, is evidently the safe part. No one ever bitterly condemned himself, that he had spent his younger years soberly: many have, that they did not. Then, some degrees of vice are owned to produce misery, and every vice leads on to worse degrees of itself, and variety of others. Or, though a vicious

person could depend on suffering no present harm, yet he cannot fail of doing a great deal: and a man would not choose, that the chief traces, which he leaves behind him, to mark out his passage through life, should be so many injuries done his fellow-creatures. At least no one would venture upon this, till he were sure there is no superior inspector of his conduct. Now there cannot be certainty against religion: and there are such evidences for it, as must require more than a few slight cavils, or bold jests, to overturn them. A careful examination then it justly demands. And if upon such examination it prove true, as undoubtedly it will; remember it is a most serious truth, in which the foremost of mankind is equally concerned with the meanest. Therefore in a case of such moment, let no false shame, nor favourite passion prevail over you; but *give your hearts early to the Lord that made you* *. Lay the foundation of your lives here, on the firm ground of Christian faith; and build upon it whatever is just and good, worthy and noble, till the structure be complete in moral beauty. The world, into which you are entering, lies in wait with variety of temptations. Unfavourable sentiments of religion will soon be suggested to you; and all the snares of luxury, false honour, and interest, spread in your way: which with most of your rank are too successful, and to many fatal. Happy the few, that in any part of life become sensible of their errors; and, with painful resolution, tread back the wrong steps, which they have taken! But happiest of men is he, who, by an even course of right conduct, from the first, as far as human frailty permits, hath at once avoided the miseries of sin, the sorrows of repent-

* Ecclus. xxxix. 5.

ance, and the difficulties of virtue; who not only can think of his present state with composure, but reflect on his past behaviour with thankful approbation, and look forwards with unmixed joy to that important future hour, when he shall appear before God, and humbly offer to him a whole life spent in his service!

SERMON II.

PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. JAMES, WESTMINSTER, JANUARY 30, 1733-4.

ISAIAH XXVI. 9.

—When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

THE gracious and wise Creator of this universe continually *upholds it by the word of his power* *: and governs each part of it suitably to its nature. The motions of the inanimate world proceed entirely from him. The actions of intelligent beings are indeed their own. But as God foresees from eternity what every agent, in every possible situation, will do or intend; he must be able to influence, direct, and temper their conduct, by many ways that are conceivable, and doubtless by many more; so as not only to assist and protect persons in *doing what is lawful and right* †; but also to make even the worst of wretches, in the worst of their crimes, undesigning instruments of his righteous purposes. And it being evidently as worthy of him, as it is easy for him, to act thus; the reason of mankind hath ever disposed them to believe, what revelation hath fully confirmed, that a *never failing Providence ordereth all things both in heaven and earth* ‡. Whatever befalls us therefore, prosperous or adverse,

* Heb. i. 3. † Ezek. xviii. 27.

‡ Collect for the eighth Sunday after Trinity.

being what our Maker judges and determines to be, on one account or another, fit and proper; events of both sorts may justly be called *his judgments*. But as, through the wickedness of the world, he hath much oftener occasion to decree punishments, than rewards: this name generally denotes the severer exercises of his power; the sufferings, that he inflicts on men; or, in other words, that they bring upon themselves. For the strong connexion, which we experience, of our follies and sins with distress and misery, is one thing, that proceeds from the just judgment of God; from that order and course of things, which he hath established.

Amidst the vast variety of providential dispensations, some are, to human faculties, unfathomable depths. We can only see in them the awful exertion of his authority, who is Lord of all; and learn the important lesson, of humbling ourselves before him, and submitting meekly to his will; in firm expectation, that whatever may look disorderly and wrong at present, will prove in due time to be wisest and best. Other things there are, capable of affording further instruction: concerning which, however, it is easy for partiality, or inattention, to make dangerous mistakes. For the same events being often permitted to befall very different persons, for as different ends; whoever will *judge according to the* first *appearance*, will be far from *judging righteous judgment* *.

But still multitudes of occurrences remain, which convey such obvious and clear informations and warnings, that Providence must intend we should apply them to our own benefit. For God doth not punish merely for the sake of punishment. Even his

* John vii. 24.

severities are the effects of goodness: and always directed to the advantage, either of those who feel them, or at least of others; *that they may hear and fear, and do no more wickedness* *. Looking back on the transactions of past ages, without a moral intention in doing it, is only gratifying an useless curiosity; or acquiring knowledge, full as likely to be ill used, as well. But it is a most serious and profitable employment, humbly to trace the footsteps of Infinite Wisdom, in the government, as well as creation, of the world; and think over the various scenes, and wonderful vicissitudes, of mortal affairs; in order to learn a true sense of our condition here, and right notions of behaving in it. *All things*, that have ever happened to men, have *happened to them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come* †. And surely an awful admonition it is, to have, as it were, the history of our species lying open before us; and the whole experience of man, since man hath been, teaching and testifying to us, what a dreadful train of evils, personal, domestic, and national, every transgression of the laws of life is capable of drawing after it. Now as some of these facts gradually sink down into the abyss of time, and disappear; the wickedness of every generation is raising up others in their room; which, by the advantage of their nearness, we may observe more distinctly; and receive deeper impressions from them, because of the closer relation, which they bear to us.

Among these, the dreadful deed of this day, and the calamities which preceded and followed it, set before our eyes a most peculiarly instructive example of divine judgments, brought down by a sinful peo-

* Deut. xiii. 11. † 1 Cor. x. 11.

ple on their own heads: concerning which we may justly say, in the words of the prophet Daniel, that *under the whole heaven hath not been done, as hath been done upon Jerusalem* *. To go through the detail of so lasting and complicated a misery, is no more possible, than it would be proper, in a discourse of this kind: the business of which is, neither to dispute upon the doubtful parts of the history, nor to amuse the hearer with the particulars of what is most undoubted: but to build religious and moral conclusions on those general facts, which every one must admit, and will easily recollect, on this mournful subject. We all know, the tragedy began with the too just occasion, unhappily given on each side, for complaints and fears. It proceeded, on the side of the disaffected, to the unjustifiable remedies, first of sedition, then of open rebellion; doubly unjustifiable, as the grievances alleged were already redressed: and it concluded, after the many distresses of a civil war undergone for several years, in the murder of the king, and the total ruin of the constitution: to which, after trying in vain every way to save it, and making such concessions for that end, as the better and greater part even of his adversaries voted to be sufficient, he died at last a willing and a patient martyr.

These are the principal points, from which we are now to draw proper uses. Passion and prejudice may easily suggest very improper ones: and this day become by such applications of things as contending parties are too apt to make, an instrument of perpetuating those animosities, against which it ought to caution us for ever. To censure with bitterness the persons or the proceedings on either side now,

* Dan. ix. 12.

when all that were concerned on both, are gone long since to answer for their sins before God, is neither useful nor decent. And to ascribe at random the same dispositions to any of the present generation, is both uncharitable towards them, and prejudicial to the public. What lies before us on the occasion, is only, from the errors of our ancestors, to instruct and direct ourselves. And we shall never see clearly, either what those errors were, or how we are to guard against them, unless we consider things with a mild, as well as serious, temper of mind. This will teach us, even where we differ, as men must be allowed to differ, in judging what the conduct of others was formerly, and how far it was right or wrong, to agree however in our determination of the essential question, what our own conduct ought to be now. Thus we shall be sure to avoid all hurtful conclusions, and take the right way to make a variety of useful ones. For doubtless every rank of men amongst us, both in church and state, from the highest to the lowest, may *learn* most important lessons of *righteousness*, from those failures of their predecessors, and those ensuing miseries, which we lament this day. There was no one party, or order of men, but did wrong: nor almost any one thing, in which they sinned, but they suffered a like return for it. And it should be our business at present, whatever our station is, ecclesiastical or civil, not only to recollect the faults in others, of which those, who went before us, complained; but chiefly those, into which they fell themselves. For thus each part of the society, instead of such mutual imputations, as tend to make the whole uneasy, would be led to such a home amendment, as tends to make it happy. But leaving, and recommending, to every sort of persons, the care of draw-

ing inferences, rightly suited to their own cases in particular; I shall only enlarge on the general directions, which so dreadful a time of sin and suffering, may give to us all in common.

Now the great comprehensive lesson, which God intends to teach by every judgment, is an awful regard to himself, as the moral governor of the world; and a faithful practice of true religion. But here some will instantly object: were not the mischiefs of those days chiefly owing to religion: many of the disputes merely of a religious nature; and all of them embittered beyond measure by a mixture of religious animosities? How then is it recommended to us from hence? A little patient attention will shew you. Real religion, the love of God our common Father, the love of him whose peculiar precept is to *love one another* *, can never produce hatred and contention upon earth. It is the strongest bond, that can be, of union and peace; the strictest restraint of every injurious passion; the most powerful incitement to every benevolent and merciful deed. It is the only foundation of trust and security, amidst all that can happen around us; and of tranquillity and joy within us. But hypocrisy, superstition, and enthusiasm, though extremely different from religion, are often mistaken for it: and these may work very fatal effects under its name: especially when pretences of extraordinary piety and purity, on one side, are made peculiarly plausible and popular, by the prevalence of immorality and profaneness on the other; which enormities, though far from universal, were too common, amongst the friends of the royal cause, notwithstanding the excellent example of the king; whom even his enemies owned to be sincerely pious,

* John xiii. 34. xv. 12. 17.

and strictly virtuous. But then, if religion may be counterfeited or perverted to bad purposes; so may every good thing in the world: honour, friendship, loyalty, public spirit, liberty itself. And things of an indifferent nature, and little use, if often misapplied, it is just and prudent to abolish. But attempts against the principles, that keep society from dissolution, as far as they can be effectual, must be pernicious. And amongst these principles, God hath taken especial care, that the first and great law of our being, the reverence due to himself, shall never be extirpated out of the world: and that every effort to weaken it, shall be close followed by consequences of private and public misery; which will severely prove, as indeed they have begun to do amongst us, that whatever men, *wise in their own conceit* *, may think, *the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding* †.

The thing then to be endeavoured is, not to lessen, but increase the regard to true religion; only distinguishing it carefully from whatever else puts on its name. Want of this care produced great errors and evils, in the days of which I am speaking. There was, it must be owned, in the friends and governors of the church, an over-warm zeal, and very blameable stiffness and severity. But there was also, in the enemies of the church, a most provoking bitterness and perverseness: with a wild eagerness for innovations, founded on ignorant prejudices, which their heated fancies raised into necessary truths: and then, looking on them as the cause of Christ, they thought themselves bound and commissioned to overturn whatever was contrary to them. The enthusiasm of that belief give them a spirit and a vehe-

* Rom. xi. 25. xii. 16. † Job xxviii. 28.

mence in all they undertook; which common men, acting on common motives, could hardly be expected to withstand. Their success, in its turn, inflamed their imaginations of being directed and assisted from above: and they thought themselves authorized by this higher dispensation, to tread under foot, without scruple, the ordinary rules of right and justice.

Let us always then beware of all such mistakes, as then prevailed on either side. Let us never be vehement either for or against matters of indifference: about matters of importance, let us be earnest with mildness: and neither desire to see authority exercised in religion, to the oppression of any one's conscience; nor yet to see liberty introduce confusion. Let us coolly consider, of which extreme we are most in danger, and oppose that; whatever shape or name it assumes. The name is but a circumstance: the thing to be dreaded is, the principle, or the practice, of advancing favourite notions and schemes, by force of fraud. The puritan zealots were shockingly guilty of that crime. The church of Rome is, if possible, still more so: probably not a little concerned in bringing on us the evils of this day: certainly a determined enemy, ever to be had in view, feared and guarded against. But then the effectual method of guarding against falsehood is not, by opposing to it a contrary falsehood, as bad or worse; and setting up licentiousness to encounter bigotry. This, instead of curing, is multiplying evils; which, opposite as they seem, will thrive together, and each assist the other's growth. Nothing can secure us from false religion, but true: nothing give happiness, private or public, but that serious regard to God, which will place us under his fatherly protection; and such rational notions of the doctrines and pre-

cepts of his holy word, as will direct us into the practice of all those duties, which we owe to each other.

The second lesson of righteousness, which the judgments of Heaven on our forefathers plainly teach us, is paying due obedience to legal authority; and religiously abstaining from the smallest instances of disrespect to it; since we find, they have insensibly carried, even well-meaning and wise men, into the utmost lengths of wrong and imprudent behaviour. All the disorders, of which this day reminds us, began with the lower marks of disaffection: immoderate complaints, indecent reflections, ill-natured interpretations, groundless suspicions; first thoughtlessly, then designedly, spread abroad; till by degrees they took such root, that nothing was too bad to be believed, nothing good enough to be approved. Discontent and clamour soon ripened into sedition and tumult: after which, open rebellion and general confusion followed of course. Still it is by no means unlawful, either to represent grievances, or to oppose ill measures. On the contrary, doing these things preserves a government; neglecting them leads to its ruin: and had the means of doing them been freely and early allowed, and honestly used, in the times we are now considering; probably none of the mischiefs, that followed, had ever been known. But then, representations must always be true, decent, needful, seasonable. And opposition should never be made, but after impartial consideration, with evident necessity, by peaceful and regular methods, by prudent and cautious steps; with proper submission to all that are set over us; and with the most sacred regard to the sovereign power: for if that be shaken, experience hath shewn us, all is in danger.

Let us therefore only remember, that whatever was wicked and pernicious formerly, is of the same nature still: and it will prove an excellent direction to our conduct. From hence persons in lower stations will learn, not to disquiet themselves and their neighbours, to ill purpose, with injudicious vehemence concerning things out of their sphere; but leave those to conduct them, whose business it is; thinking charitably of them, and praying heartily for them. Those of higher degree will be induced, to proceed, in what lies before them, with temper and considerateness, with equity and candour; with care, neither to provoke resentment, nor excite jealousy. And we shall all, of every rank, be instructed, to acknowledge thankfully the many blessings that we enjoy, beyond what our miserable ancestors did a century ago: and not only to bear with cheerfulness the necessary, though heavy, burthens, that have been laid on us, for the safety of all which can justly be dear to us; but submit with patience to whatever, we may any of us apprehend, we suffer more than we need: seriously reflecting, what fatal effects may arise from a different spirit. For in the times before us, when there were confessedly many grievances, and some of them great ones; yet how inconsiderable were they, when compared with the bloodshed and devastation, the oppression and confusion, the total destruction of church and state, which unwise and undutiful attempts for redress at length produced! Let not us therefore *murmur, as some of them murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer* *.

A third lesson, which this day affords us, is, not to be fond of innovations, either in civil matters, or ecclesiastical. It is a common weakness of mankind,

* 1 Cor. x. 10.

to overlook the advantages of their condition, and dwell only on its inconveniences and defects, real or imagined; till, though a very tolerable, or perhaps, on the whole, a very good one; it appears to them worse, than any other, into which they can fall. Even the more indolent therefore, instead of discountenancing, look favourably on proposals for change. And the more enterprising rush on with eagerness to unhinge and overset; never once reflecting, whether the project be not either impossible to be accomplished, or not worth the pains; injurious to others, or likely to prove pernicious to themselves: never seriously considering, what they have to substitute; whether it can take place, and last; whether it will be, *on the whole, for the better or the worse.* Thus were too many of our predecessors in this nation disposed: extremely miserable under a constitution of government, which they found too late inseparable from their happiness: and so earnest to reform every part of it, that they ruined the whole. The projects for establishing perfect liberty in the state, ended, as too much liberty always will, in absolute tyranny: successive tyrannies of various shapes, and names unheard of, dispossessing each other; harassing the nation with continual uncertainties and alarms; exhausting it with daily executions and impositions. The schemes for restoring an imaginary purity in the church, unexpectedly ran to such lengths, as destroyed the whole frame of it, and involved the crown in its fall. No other form of religion could be set up, instead of that which was abolished. Men's minds were held in continual agitation, by the wild zeal of contending sects: teaching doctrines; some blasphemous against God; some, subversive of all order

amongst men; some, contrary to all care of virtue and good life: and every thing was tolerated, but what had a right to be established. How these things would have ended: whether in a total contempt of religion, and moral obligations too; or whether after that was found insupportable, as it soon must, the Romish superstition, ever vigilant and active, would have overspread the nation, wearied out with divisions, and glad to embrace any thing, that promised unity: this God hath mercifully hid from our knowledge, by blessing us, in the extremity of such misery, with its only cure, the restoration of our ancient constitution. Let us esteem it then as we ought, and be zealous to preserve it: improve it, if we can really and safely; but not be forward to practise upon it without necessity, or some very valuable end. Hoping for perfection in any thing human, is visionary; murmuring for want of it, is resolving never to be happy; and taking irregular methods to obtain it, is the sure way to be wretched. Some alterations indeed, from time to time, the reason of things and the changes of circumstances may require. But that no wanton or doubtful, much less dangerous trials, ought to be made, the fatal experience of this day fully shews.

And a fourth direction, which it gives as plainly, is, to beware of the spirit of party. Nothing, but that, could have blinded and embittered people so, as to make them destroy themselves and the public, without seeing or feeling it. Few, if any, at first, had the least intention of what they afterwards did: very probably, had it been foretold them, they would have abhorred the thought. But persons cannot even guess, when they give themselves up to this kind of zeal, how strong it may grow within them;

or how they may be entangled, and carried on, against their wills. *The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water:* nobody can say, how far it may overflow, or how hard it may be to get it back into its channel, and repair the breach. *Therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with* *, and by mutual provocation worked up into a rage. When party resentments and contests run high, the general good is no longer in view: both sides attend wholly to the advancement of their own power; depressing their adversaries; forcing them into measures, hurtful to the public; the worse, the better; and no way is left untried to ruin one another, till the ruin of the whole is too probable a consequence. But above all, in countries blest with freedom, amidst numberless advantages, there is one peculiar danger; that the high spirit which it gives men, and the full opportunities which they have to exert that spirit, may produce dissensions utterly destructive, not only of peace and comfort, but, in the end, of freedom itself. Let us therefore always remember St. Paul's caution, *If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another* †; and behave suitably to St. Peter's rule, *as free, yet not using our liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God* ‡.

These then are the instructions, which the dreadful judgment, this day commemorated, affords us: to *fear God, honour the king, and not meddle with them that are given to change* §; *but lead quiet and peaceable lives, in all godliness and honesty* ‖. The transgression of these duties, was, by the natural consequences of things, and the just permission of

* Prov. xvii. 14. † Gal. v. 15. ‡ 1 Pet. ii. 16.
§ Prov. xxiv. 21. ‖ 1 Tim. ii. 2.

Heaven, the cause on the people's part, of those terrible calamities, under which our ancestors groaned so long; and were made to *learn righteousness*, not as we, by the experience of others, but by heavy sufferings of their own. To these, however, God in his good time graciously put an end: and re-establishing our ancient form of government, hath, by a wonderful succession of kind providences, preserved it, through innumerable dangers, from abroad and at home, to this day. Nor perhaps, with all the faults of the present age, which God knows are neither few nor small ones, would it be easy for us to fix on almost any other time or country, in which we could, with reason, rather have made it our choice to live. Let us therefore join gratitude for his mercies with fear of his judgments; and be moved by both, to piety and virtue, public and private. He hath given us great and frequent proofs of his readiness to save and protect us; together with some few, most deserved instances, of displeasure and punishment: thus placing before our eyes, and leaving to our choice, the happiness of a religious, loyal, and moral people, or the miseries of a profane, rebellious, and wicked one. *Now therefore,* to conclude in the words of the prophet Samuel, *if ye will fear the Lord, and serve him, and obey his voice; then shall both ye, and the king that reigneth over you, continue, following the Lord your God. But if ye will not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against his commandment; then shall the hand of the Lord be against you, as it was against your fathers* *.

* 1 Sam. xii. 13, 14, 15.

SERMON III.

[PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. JAMES, WESTMINSTER, NOVEMBER 27, 1737, BEING THE SUNDAY AFTER THE DEATH OF HER MAJESTY THE LATE QUEEN CAROLINE.]

ECCLES. vii. 4.

The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning.

THE providence of God is one great instrument, which he uses for our instruction: and every dispensation of it is fitted to convey very useful admonitions to persons of attentive minds. But the mournful events of things have a peculiar force to excite recollection and serious thought: to place our condition here, in a just and strong light before our eyes; to awaken sentiments within us, of piety and resignation, humanity and compassion; and prompt us to make these the rule of our conduct. So long as nothing alarms us, we grow too commonly negligent and inconsiderate; forget our dangers, forget our mercies; give up our hearts to every passion that seizes on them; and thus are often led to do great harm, both to others and ourselves. But *when the judgments of God are in the earth, then the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness* *. When *the voice of the Lord crieth unto the city, Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it* †: then *the ears of them, that hear, shall hearken; the heart also of the*

* Isa. xxvi. 9. † Mic. vi. 9.

rash shall understand knowledge *. But of all the strokes of God's hand, that which carries the greatest awe with it, is death; *the sentence of the Lord over all flesh* †. The sight or the thought of that important change, from the constitution of our nature, makes very strong impressions upon us: and the longer we revolve the subject in our minds, the more reason we find to be deeply affected by it, and act with a continual view to it. Nothing therefore would influence us more effectually to *apply our hearts unto wisdom* ‡; if it were not for this one circumstance, that being surrounded with daily instances of mortality, they are familiarized to us in such a manner by their frequency, that though in reason they ought to have the greater effect upon us for their number, yet in fact they have usually little or none; unless there be something, either in their nearness to us, or their public importance, to distinguish them from common cases, and engage a more interesting attention to them. We should therefore be very careful never to miss the opportunity of improving ourselves within, by due reflections on such deaths, as our own particular concern in them, or the general one, makes considerable: but, how great soever our loss be otherwise, resolve to gain this advantage notwithstanding, that *by the sadness of the countenance our heart shall become better* §.

For so valuable a purpose, it is well worth while to bear with all the gloominess of *the house of mourning*; to place ourselves voluntarily in it, a while, and return thither from time to time; deliver ourselves up to such meditations, as we find it fitted to inspire; and dwell upon them somewhat longer, than

* Isa. xxxii. 3, 4.
† Ecclus. xli. 3.
‡ Psa. xc. 12.
§ Eccles. vii. 3.

the first, unavoidable impressions oblige us. For most useful lessons will *the heart of the wise* be able to learn there; and excellent rules of conduct, with respect to himself, to the memory of those who are deceased, and to such as they have left behind them.

I. With respect to himself. *Death is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to his heart* *. It is because we do not *lay it to our hearts*, that we most of us go on just as if we imagined there was to be no end at all: and though we do not indeed speculatively think so, yet we live and act upon that supposition: and our knowing it to be a false one hath no manner of influence, for want of reflecting upon it as such. Hence we indulge our souls in vehement desires, and fill our days with endless projects: every point gained, opening an inlet for more to be aimed at; every failure redoubling our earnestness to recover our lost ground: and we never recollect how life is wasting under us all the while. Even to the departure of others before our eyes we attend, only as an opportunity of framing and following new schemes: and thus the death of our fellow-creatures proves an occasion of our forgetting the more entirely, that we shall ever die ourselves. This could not be, would we but stop a little at *the house of mourning*; and make the most obvious of all reflections there, from contemplating the end of others, how very quickly our own end may come, and how soon it must. Such thoughts will enliven our diligence in performing our duty here: in *working, while it is day, the works of him that sent us* †. For how suddenly soever the night may overtake us thus employed; *blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he comes, shall find so doing* ‡. But the same

* Ecclus. vii. 2. † John ix. 4. ‡ Matt. xxiv. 46.

sort of meditations must surely moderate, beyond all things, our warmth in every other pursuit: and dispose us, instead of plunging inconsiderately forwards, till in the midst of our bustle we drop unexpectedly into the grave; rather to secure the present time, for recollecting, before we go out of the world, what our behaviour hath been hitherto in it: that so we may endeavour to correct our mistakes, supply our omissions, perfect our faith and repentance; and through God's grace, which alone can enable us, form ourselves into such a temper of mind, *that we may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless* *.

And as the thoughts of death are excellently fitted to compose the vehemence of our other passions, so they are fitted particularly to check that very sinful kind of vehemence, which we are exceedingly prone to express, one against another. Whoever will but consider of how short a duration our existence here is, and with how great a number of unavoidable sufferings it is filled, will be thoroughly convinced, that there is no manner of need for us to load the *few and evil days* † of our fellow-creatures with additional uneasiness, but great occasion to give one another all the comfort we can; and live as friendly as possible, whilst we stay together, with those from whom we are to part so soon, and appear before the Father of all; who will treat us as we have treated our brethren.

Another instruction, which *the heart of the wise* will learn *in the house of mourning*, is, never to flatter himself with expectations of any lasting good in a state so uncertain as this. For let the prospect appear as fair as it will; yet besides a multitude of other things to destroy it, every single instance of

* 2 Pet. iii. 14. † Gen. xlvii. 9.

death reminds us, that our own lives may fail; that their lives, in whom our happiness is placed, or on whom our hopes depend, may fail; and even those, who seem to stand at a great distance from us, may overturn, by their fall, the whole edifice, which our forward imagination had erected. Undoubtedly the dreams, which men indulge, of enjoying more in the world than it hath to bestow on them, are mighty pleasing ones for a while. But from the first they do us harm: they give us a different turn of mind, from what our Maker intended we should have: and when a disappointment comes; then lasting wretchedness immediately succeeds our short-lived felicity. For, whether we continue in a state of dejection; or whether we repeat the same folly; expect again, and are again deceived; either way we are miserable. Or could we escape with ever so little uneasiness, or enjoy in this manner ever so much pleasure here; yet setting our hearts on that, as our portion, and seeking our happiness where God hath not placed it, can never end well for us. And therefore we should contemplate with care every dispensation of Providence, that may warn us against so fatal a mistake; and hearken diligently to that voice, with which God hath appointed that every thing on earth shall cry aloud to us; *Arise ye, and depart: for this is not your rest**. So far from it indeed, so absolutely incapable is the present world of giving us any security for any one enjoyment: that the highest and the lowest persons in it are quite upon a level in this respect; equally unable to promise the least thing with certainty, either to themselves or to others. Whatever is human, is alike precarious; and our only sure dependence is on the Power that made us. *Put not*

* Mic. ii. 10.

your trust in princes, nor in any child of man: for there is no help in them. Their breath goeth forth; they return to their earth: in that very day their thoughts perish. Blessed is he, that hath the God of Jacob for his help; whose hope is in the Lord his God: which made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is therein; which keepeth truth for ever *. A world, like this, cannot be the seat of happiness. Yet our gracious Creator and Father certainly designed us to be happy. And therefore, the less provision he hath made for it here, the surer we may be, that a better state remains in reserve. It is true, indeed, we are all sinners; and from our own deserts could have little ground of comfort in looking beyond the grave. But we have it abundantly from the assurance of forgiveness, on most equitable terms, in Jesus Christ; *who hath brought life and immortality to light* †, *and delivered them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage* ‡. Here then it is that the uncertainty of life, and every thing in it, directs us to fix: on the firm foundation of faith in the Gospel of our blessed Redeemer. Secured, by him, of future bliss, in proportion to the present afflictions, which we bear as we ought, we shall pass through them all, not only with composed, but cheerful resignation: the more stedfastly we look on the dark side of objects, the clearer light will arise to us out of them; and the truest consolation from *the house of mourning*.

You see therefore, what improvement *the heart of the wise* may receive from a general consideration of *the end of all men*. But the further view, of the different ends of different men, is a subject of yet fur-

* Ps. cxlvi. 3—6. † 2 Tim. i. 10. ‡ Heb. ii. 15.

ther advantage. *The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death* *. The former of these reflexions is indeed a very dreadful, but a very instructive one. For whether we set before our eyes the dying terrors of an ill person, whose conscience is awakened too late; or the fatal insensibility of one *hardened through the deceitfulness of sin* †, and going to *lie down in sorrow* ‡, without the least apprehension of it: no admonition can be either stronger or more important, than that which both these cases naturally convey. But the death of the righteous gives instruction unattended with horror: and the seriousness, which it inspires, is pleasing and peaceful. In one way indeed of considering things, the departure of good and virtuous persons from amongst men is matter of most melancholy reflexion. Their number is very small: and their use is very great. They *are the salt of the earth* §, that preserve society from utter corruption and dissolution. And though the generality of the world hath little regard to this; and is much more apt to depreciate the merit of such, than to think of the good they do, or the evils they prevent; yet the example and influence of but a few of them, distributed amongst the rest of mankind, is a thing of much benefit: and when any of them are qualified with eminent abilities, and placed by Providence in stations of importance; there are times, when their life may be a blessing of incredible extent; and their death prove the means of opening a breach, for unknown mischiefs to rush in. *Help, Lord: for the godly man ceaseth: for the faithful fail from among the children of men* ‖. *The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart: and*

* Prov. xiv. 32. † Heb iii. 13. ‡ Isa. l. 11.
§ Matth. v. 13. ‖ Ps. xii. 1.

the merciful are taken away; none considering, that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come *. Such reflexions, as these, it may perhaps appear wisdom rather to drive from us, than invite them to disquiet us. But it is always wise to think of whatever it is possible to prevent: and a reformation of national sins is the plain method to prevent the coming of national calamities: as the reformation of ourselves is, to prevent our being upon the whole the worse for them, if they should come. Whatever human supports may at any time fail, God will always support that people, who place a virtuous trust in him. Or though a nation were growing, in appearance, incorrigibly bad; yet they, who are careful to preserve themselves from the spreading infection, particularly by prudent meditations on the threatening removal of valuable persons, may possibly be thus excited to such usefulness, as will defer, if not hinder, its ruin: at least they take the way to *deliver their own souls* †, undoubtedly from the punishments of another life, and perhaps also, wholly or in part, from sufferings in this. *The days of man are like a shadow, that declineth: and he withereth like the grass. But the Lord is the same: and his years shall have no end. The children of his servants shall continue: and their seed shall stand fast in his sight* ‡.

Be the loss thereof otherwise as great as it will, which befalls, at any time, either the public in general, or ourselves in particular, when the hand of God snatches away the worthy and the eminent; yet thinking seriously and rightly upon it, we may certainly extract more than a little good from it. And whoever is taught effectually, by such an occurrence, to *cease from man whose breath is in his nos-*

* Isa. lvii. 1. † Ezek. xiv. 14. ‡ Ps. cii. 11. 27, 28.

trils *, and place his expectations and hopes in the ever-living God; far from being overwhelmed by the melancholy part of the event, will be able, with a very considerable degree of composedness to contemplate and improve by the enlivening and comforting parts.

Amongst others, it surely is one very great comfort, to see or to hear of that distinguished tranquillity, with which religious persons meet their approaching dissolution. *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace* †. Sometimes indeed fears and doubts, arising from the influence of a disordered body, cloud the mind of the righteous at their death, and obscure their setting sun. Nor is it useless to take notice even of these cases, for our future satisfaction, if ever the like should be our own, that our covenant-right of God's favour may be very well grounded, notwithstanding for the present we are quite incapable of seeing and *rejoicing in the light of his countenance* ‡. But when the pious soul enjoys in that hour its genuine serenity, then is the beauty of holiness beheld in the strongest point of view. Then we have a noble opportunity of discerning what religion is, and what it can do; when we observe the manner, in which it enables those, who are supported by it, to possess themselves in the face of death. When we see them, in the strength of it, joining the tenderest affections to those whom they leave behind, with the quietest submission to part with them; and the most virtuous reasons for wishing to stay longer here, with the most dutiful obedience to Him who calls them away: when we see them calmly divesting themselves of their dearest attachments to life; and only solicitous to provide, by serious advice and kind re-

* Isa. ii. 22. † Psalm xxxvii. 37. ‡ Psalm lxxxix. 16.

commendations, for the happiness of those who survive them: in the midst of the acutest pains *waiting* with the mildest patience *all the days of their appointed time* *; and preserving a greater sensibility of every one's sufferings, than their own: shewing themselves now, what they always were; but rising in their virtues proportionably to their trial, and testifying that *their faith is the victory that overcometh the world* †; such occasions, as God knows they had need bring some advantage with them, furnish us with uncommon means of learning in the chambers of death, what are the true principles for the conduct of life. But,

II. *The heart of the wise*, whilst it dwells *in the house of mourning*, will not only improve itself in a general sense of Christian piety, but also more especially, in such precepts of it, as constitute a proper behaviour with respect to the memory of those, whose departure is at any time the object of our thoughts. The dead indeed are out of our reach: our goodness extends not to them, and our enmity can do them no harm. But for the sake of common justice and humanity we are bound to the amiable duties, of shewing candour in regard to their failures; and paying the honour, which is due to their merit.

That we should speak and think with mildness, concerning such as partake of our own nature; and are in nothing more like us, than in the frailties to which they may be liable; this is what all men, at all times, have a right to claim from us. But they who *have finished their course* ‡, and *whose dwelling is no* longer *with flesh* §; they seem to have a peculiar exemption from those severities of censure,

* Job xiv. 14. † 1 John v. 4

‡ Acts xx. 24. 2 Tim. iv. 7. § Dan. ii. 12.

which amongst the living are so much too liberally distributed and returned. Not that good and bad characters are to be confounded after death, any more than before it: or *the wicked to be as the righteous** in that respect, or any other. But yet, not even the crimes of such, as have been worse offenders than ordinary, should be related with aggravation and insult; or indeed be mentioned at all, more than the interests of virtue and mankind require. Much less are we at liberty to trample on the ashes of persons, on the whole religious and virtuous: or receive accusations against them, of which very possibly a great part may chiefly, or entirely, proceed from invention or mistake; from ignorance of facts, or inattention to circumstances, or weakness of judgment. Nay indeed we ought not to dwell upon the failings, with which we have the best reason to apprehend they were chargeable, so as to give these for their character: but cast a veil over their imperfections, in reverence to their estimable qualities. Towards the living this is our duty: but if we fail of it towards the dead nothing can excuse us. The thought of that awful change, which they have undergone, might alone be sufficient to calm every emotion and prejudice, that we may formerly have felt against them. But besides, all the provocations, that we can have received from them, are now at an end. In whatever they have interfered with us; they will do so no more. Whatever we have thought blamable in them; the cognizance, whether it be or not, is removed to a higher tribunal. They are gone to answer for their deeds: we shall very shortly follow to answer for ours: let us judge one another with that mercy, with which may our Lord and Master

* Gen. xviii. 25.

judge us all. And let us remember too, that in a worldly way of considering things, this is the discreet method. *Rejoice not over thy greatest enemy, when dead: but remember, that we die all**. Soon will the time come, when our names also shall lie exposed to such usage as the survivors may think fit to give them. And therefore the consideration of what is *the end of all men*, should make us much too prudent, ever to set an example of posthumous rancour: and incline us, by treating the memories of others with generous tenderness, to secure the same treatment to our own hereafter.

The next duty, of which mortality should remind us, towards the deceased, is paying just honour to their virtues. Honour is a debt, owing indeed to worthy characters in this world: but seldom well paid, till after they are gone out of it. As soon as it is too late, we begin to perceive, that they deserved to have been much more highly valued, than they were. And we should all of us learn from hence, to esteem those for the future, whilst they are alive, whom we shall esteem, when they are dead. But at least, when they have completed the part assigned them here, and performed the principal scenes of it well: then it becomes high time, that those applauses should be given them, which were their due before; and their memory be put in possession of whatever they ought to have personally enjoyed. Flattering the dead will do neither them, nor indeed their reputation, any service: or if it could, would do, at the same time, much harm to mankind; by taking away distinction, where it ought to be preserved. But as the desire of leaving behind us an honourable reputation, when we have earned it, is naturally a strong

* Ecclus. viii. 7.

principle in virtuous breasts; and every useful one to human society: it should be carefully cherished, by allowing to every degree of real desert its proper acknowledgment; and using the only means, that we have, of making those yet live, who in every other respect are dead to us. The true immortality, God bestows on his faithful servants, and them alone, in another world: but we should give in this all that we are able, the poor shadow of it, an honest fame, to as many as are entitled to it, in their respective shares. Whoever hath gone through life with only a benevolent heart and upright intention, though it be in a private rank, hath merit considerable enough not to be soon forgotten. And in proportion as other things concur to raise the character of men, they should be respected both more and longer. Whenever therefore the virtues of any persons have been adorned by nature with uncommon accomplishments, and by themselves with valuable acquisitions: when they have been called out by Providence into the view of mankind; have resisted the greatest temptations; appeared equal without effort to the greatest difficulties; filled with diffusive beneficence the largest sphere of public life, and yet paid the most accurate and amiable regard to the various duties of private relations: when they have spent their days in this manner, and finished them in the manner described before; then the prudent in heart will regret their loss with the deepest concern, and *have them in everlasting remembrance* *. But,

III. We may learn, from a considerate meditation on the examples of mortality, very useful instructions for our behaviour, not only with respect to the de-

* Psal. cxii. 6.

ceased; but those whom they have left behind, any way peculiarly related to them.

The death of a wise and good, of a near and affectionate friend, is unspeakably the greatest of all calamities. One single stroke of this kind may destroy almost the whole comfort of our lives at once: and a very few of them leave us in the most dreadful of solitudes: destitute of any one to intrust with full confidence, amidst numbers to suspect and fear; destitute of help against our own frailties and infirmities; and vastly more miserable for having been happy. Whoever is capable of these reflexions, if he allows himself time to make them, will sincerely pity all that have suffered such a loss; and equally esteem all that shew they are sensible of it. Right affections are the very foundation of a right character: and affection continued to be expressed, in the manner it ought, for friends and relations at and after their deaths, carries in it an evident mark, both of sincerity and strength. When, instead of withdrawing from the mournful scene, persons fix their hearts intirely upon it; fulfil to the very utmost the whole *labour of love* *, to which Providence then calls them; and, after all proves fruitless, tranfer their concern in a proper degree to the support of their partners in sorrow; each evidencing their consciousness of the other's worth, by a mutual tenderness that goes through them all: the knowledge of this behaviour, in any station of life, must needs fill our minds with great honour and regard for such as feel affliction in so exemplary a manner; and dispose us effectually to avoid whatever may increase their sufferings, and do whatever may alleviate them. But especially those, whom we are bound to reverence at all times,

* Heb. vi. 10.

we should reverence doubly in their distress: and those, for whom at all times we are bound to pray, we should then with uncommon earnestness recommend to *the God of all comfort* *. Let us therefore accordingly at present beseech Him, that he would be merciful to that house, which is now peculiarly *the house of mourning:* that he would be merciful to these nations, which have the justest cause to share in all their griefs: that he would *turn from us those evils, that we most righteously have deserved:* and continue to us those blessings, which through his infinite goodness we enjoy. Grant these our petitions, gracious God, for the sake of thy ever blessed Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

* 2 Cor. i. 3.

SERMON IV.

PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. BRIDGET, LONDON, BEFORE THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORD MAYOR, &c. ON MONDAY IN EASTER WEEK, 1738.

1 PET. iv. 10.

As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

THE inducements that we have to relieve the miseries, and promote the happiness of our fellow creatures, are, God be thanked, both many in number, and of various kinds. Our hearts naturally incline us to it: our reason approves of it as right. The more we cultivate kind dispositions, the truer peace we possess within; and the greater capacity of social happiness, the sweetest part of the enjoyment of life. Willingness to do good, is always rewarded with the esteem of mankind; and selfishness of temper, the constant object of every one's aversion. We have frequent experience in ourselves, what suffering is: and are therefore inexcusable, if we overlook it in others. We live in a world, where, if it were not for the exercise of mercy and pity, the face of things would look dreadful with miserable objects; and the multitudes of persons, driven to

despair, make society unsafe. Besides, we know the vicissitudes of human affairs: and are nearly concerned, to encourage by our example that spirit of goodness and compassion; of which we or ours may, on one occasion or another, easily come to have great need.

These are powerful motives to beneficence: and yet the influence of them is too commonly exceeding small. The hearts of some persons have but little sensibility; and those of others a very confined and partial one. Some content themselves with talking of benevolence, instead of cultivating it; or with the inward feeling of good affections, instead of exerting them: and others give scope to their wrong inclinations, and their right ones, promiscuously; and so easily do more harm in the world, than good. To speculative reasonings but few persons attend: and fewer still are governed by them in practice. Their liableness to the common accidents of life, men either forget amidst the pleasures of it, or turn into an argument for attending the more closely to their own interests. As for reputation; a few acts of goodness, well managed, will obtain as much of it as they are concerned about. Or, if they cannot be esteemed; they may hope at least to be courted. And even if they fail of this; they can affect to despise it, and appear, notwithstanding happy; some in their wealth, some in their voluptuousness.

Our wise and good Maker hath therefore not left us to the influence of these motives only: but, as he saw it necessary, that in all our ways we should be directed by regard to him; so he hath added infinite force to the above-mentioned considerations, by giving us the knowledge of himself, and teaching us to

look on them as evidences of his will. He undoubtedly designed the good things of this world, not for the gratification of a few of his creatures; but for the benefit of all. And he hath divided them unequally amongst us; not that one part of the human race should sink under misery and want, and the other look down with contempt upon them: but that pity and gratitude should be mutually exercised, and the pleasure of doing and receiving good, felt among men: that the poor should be serviceable to the rich; they, in return, kind to the poor; and both united in the bonds of mutual good-will, from a sense of their mutual dependency. These, it appears, from the knowledge that we have of his nature, must have been his intentions. The same thing appears further from the nature he hath given us, and the circumstances in which he hath placed us. But that no sort of evidence of it might be wanting, he hath made known to the world his pleasure by express revelation also: requiring of us all *to do good, and to communicate* *, both as we are servants, bound in every thing to obey him; and as we are stewards, appointed and intrusted by him for this very purpose.

Let us therefore consider, with due seriousness,

I. What general influence it should have upon us, that we are *stewards of the manifold grace of God.*

II. What influence in particular with respect to those methods of charity, which are the occasion of our present meeting.

I. Let us consider the general influence. Every thing, which God hath done for the good of his creatures, is *grace* or favour to them: and every thing, which he has placed in our hands for their good, is

* Heb. xiii. 16.

grace of which we are stewards. All the means and opportunities we have, of making the world, or any part of it, better or happier; by our knowledge or wealth, by our power or interest, our care or pains, our friendly behaviour or good example: are given us in trust, to be so exercised. How *manifold* these are, upon the whole, it is not perhaps easy for us to be fully sensible: but we should each of us think very carefully, what his own share of them is, and wherein it consists. For no one is without his *talent*, though some have more committed to them than others: and they who have least, will be expected to improve what they have; as our Saviour's parable very awfully shews*. The poorest person in the world, is capable of being useful, some way, to his fellow-creatures: and the greatest can never be above the obligation of imitating, to their power, the beneficence of their Creator. They who are engaged in business, far from having their attention confined to themselves, have usually, by the very means of their business, peculiar advantages both for knowing and supplying the wants of others. And such as have no particular employment, have only the privilege of a freer choice, what part they will take in that general one assigned to us all, of doing good.

Since then we are appointed, each in his proper station, dispensers and *stewards of the manifold grace of God;* it concerns us to behave as faithful ones: not to intercept the streams of the divine bounty; nor confine to our own gratification, what our Maker hath designed for the common benefit of all around us. He hath not indeed fixed the proportions of any kind of charity: for circumstances vary so infinitely, that general rules concerning such matters are impossible.

* Matt. xxv. 14—30.

And this latitude should not give anxiety to any good mind: for we serve a most equitable Master. But neither should it give encouragement to bad minds; and make them imagine, that where nothing is ascertained, they may do just as little as they please. For God will expect from every one, what may be reasonably expected from them: and hath left this matter at large, that we may shew, not our backwardness to serve him, but our zeal. Imprudent zeal he never approves: but goodness, confined within the bounds of discretion, is always more acceptable to him, in proportion as it is more abundant. And, though not every failure in degree shall expose us to punishment; yet *he which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly: and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully* *.

However unactive therefore we may naturally be; yet, as persons intrusted by the Lord of all, it imports us greatly to be diligent. For industry is a valuable part of faithfulness: and *slothful servants* will be considered, in the day of judgment, as *wicked* ones †. Some ways of doing good may possibly be less pleasing to us: some persons our prejudices, our passions, or interests, would tempt us to overlook, rather than serve: and some things, that are only seeming instances of benevolence, we should be willing to mistake for real ones; and indulge a false good-nature, without regard to consequences, however bad. But when we consider, that in all these cases we are to act for God; this makes a very great change in the view of things: and may both oblige us at some times *to do with our might* ‡, what perhaps we could least have wished; and restrain us, at others, from doing at all, what injudiciously we

* 2 Cor. ix. 6. † Matt. xxv. 26. ‡ Eccles. ix. 10.

should have desired the most. Another important use of looking upon ourselves in this light, is, that how great soever our talents may be, and how right soever the use that we make of them; it must still be the strongest reason possible for humility, one of the most excellent of virtues, to think, that all we have is given us, and all we do is but *ministering*. Then, at the same time that our being intrusted will teach us these things, our being jointly intrusted will teach us another: never to invade each other's province, nor *stretch ourselves beyond our measure*; but as God hath distributed to every man, so to walk†: for he is not the author of confusion, but of peace‡*. God is the judge, and a much better surely than we, what employment is fittest for each of his servants: and how enterprising soever any of us may be now, or how discontented soever with the narrowness of our own sphere of action: we may have cause enough to be glad at last, that no more was committed to our care. Yet these reflections must not be carried to such a length, as to let the business of our common Master suffer, under pretence of its belonging, not to us, but our fellow-servant; when there is no impropriety, but only somewhat more labour or expence, in stepping a little out of our way, to prevent the ill consequences of another's neglect. It must be owned a difficult matter, not to mistake in these cases on one side or the other: but involuntary mistakes will never be imputed to us. It must be owned a very serious thing, to be *stewards of God:* but it is a very noble one, to be employed under our heavenly Father in the work, that he delights in most; and for the happiness of our brethren, perhaps to all eternity. If indeed we are found, instead of this, either hiding

* 2 Cor. x. 14. † 1 Cor. vii. 17. ‡ 1 Cor. xiv. 33.

the talents committed to us *, or wasting our Master's goods †, or misusing those to whom we ought to have ministered ‡; then miserable will our condition be, when God shall say to us, *Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward* §. But on the other hand our comfort is, that a sincere endeavour to discharge our office as we ought, whatever our imperfections be, shall entitle us to the sentence, *Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord* ‖.

With the impression therefore of these reflections upon our minds, let us now proceed to enquire,

II. What influence the thought, that we are *stewards of the manifold grace of God*, should have upon us, with respect to those particular methods of doing good, which are the occasion of our present meeting.

Now these are of three sorts, which indeed comprehend almost the whole of public charity: places of maintenance and instruction for children; hospitals for the sick; and houses of correction and work for the dissolute and idle.

Relieving poor parents from the burden of a family, which they are unable to support, must needs be a most welcome charity to them; and is evidently a very useful one to the public: for it tends to the future increase of the community, as well as to make the present members of it happy. And teaching poor children religion and virtue, one should think were plainly a beneficial thing too. For let it prove ineffectual as often as it will; they must be a little more likely to abstain from what is wrong, for being taught what is right. Some principles, some notions

* Matt. xxv. 18. † Luke xvi. 1. ‡ Matt. xxiv. 49.
§ Luke xvi. 2. ‖ Matt. xxv. 23.

of life and behaviour, they will learn: which then would you have them learn, good or bad? They may indeed possibly learn bad things mixed with good, under the notion of religion. But considering the purity, in which religion is professed amongst us, there cannot well be much of this kind; and there needs not be any thing. Some persons, however, appear to have great fears of superstition; and no fears of any thing else. But do they really find in fact, that this is the reigning and dangerous error of the present age? Is it with superstition, that your servants, and your children as they grow up, and the generality of the people, are infected; or is it not with profligateness: such open and avowed contempt of the laws of God and man, of all sobriety and order, as this nation hath never known before, nor can long subsist under an increase of it? But if you are in earnest afraid of superstition; be afraid where you have cause of fear. There is a real, and a dreadful superstition gaining ground, that of the church of Rome. And the more ignorant men are of all religion, and the more prejudiced against their own form and their own teachers of religion; the more easily they are won over into that most corrupt and formidable communion. Think then, I intreat you, what would our condition be; should ever the main part of this nation become, one half papists, and the other profligates! For as to the scheme of virtue without religion: even if it could be put in practice, yet there is a God, and he ought to be feared; and there is a support in piety, of which mankind ought not to be deprived. But whoever knows any thing of the world, must see, that such a scheme can never be put in practice: that human nature hath daily need, both to be restrained from evil, and excited to

good, in cases where none but religious motives can do either effectually. And as these have been constantly found necessary, in all ages and countries whatever: so they are certainly of the most indispensable necessity, where incentives to vice are in the greatest abundance, and liberty is the least controlled by law.

But to return. Together with the general rules of their duty, these children are taught such other knowledge, as may qualify them for employments fitted to their station: and then put out to such employments; with a further assistance, where it is requisite, of some little matter to begin with, towards gaining a livelihood. And this also surely must be of public benefit. Were they indeed either taken or kept away from other business, more useful, or in which hands are more wanted; were they raised, without visible merit, above their original rank, into one of less labour or more knowledge, to the prejudice of those, who were by birth their superiors: such things would be just objections, though not to the institution of these schools, yet to the management of them. But when only the parents are kept from distress, and the children from idleness or wicked courses; when care is taken, to choose them from a condition suitable to that, for which they are designed; and neither in their manner of living, nor their instruction, to set them above that: every one will allow, it would be excellent private charity, to do this for a child; and why not as good public charity, to do it for many children; since the greater the number is, the less in proportion the expence?

The second method of doing good, before us at present, is that of hospitals for the sick. And what-

ever objections may be made against other benefactions to the poor, there can be none against restoring ease and health to them: against giving them those helps, which their distressed families cannot give; and enabling them to be useful again to themselves, and to the public. Now hospitals are infinitely the best means to this necessary end. They are a sure way of detecting counterfeits: they preserve the sick from unskilful hands: they are so many public schools, where the knowledge of medicine is taught, in the most effectual manner, for the common benefit of mankind. They relieve multitudes, who either cannot demand, or cannot obtain, parochial relief: and they do it, beyond comparison, in the surest, the speediest, and the cheapest manner that can be. So that, were we to suppose even great mismanagement in hospitals; they would still remain preferable to all other methods of providing for the sick: and yet the numbers and characters of the governors of our present hospitals, secure them, as far as may be, against any mismanagement at all. Another advantage is, that ever so little, given to this kind of charity, hath its proportionable good effect: and the diseases and accidents, which befall the lower part of the world, are so many and so frequent, that ever so much given may easily be employed. Then it well deserves to be considered further, that sickness affords a favourable opportunity for good impressions: and therefore most important service may be done to poor creatures in these places, by shewing them from experience the bad consequences of vicious lives, and the good ones of regularity; by giving them strong impressions of the excellency of compassion and mercy, at the time when they are partaking of it; and awakening them

to a sense of what their condition requires of them, and their eternal happiness depends upon. But the benefit of hospitals hath been so very well explained to the world of late *, and is so generally acknowledged; that I need only add a word concerning one sort of them, that for the diseased in mind.

These poor creatures are made by their disorder, whilst it continues, entirely useless to society: and many of them, at the same time, exceedingly miserable in themselves; by the frightful, or the gloomy train of ideas, that possesses their minds; and the vehement passions, that so frequently agitate them. Now when persons in low circumstances fall into this unhappy state, as many of them do; their friends are more incapable of taking care of them, than in any other case whatever: and there is no way of attempting their cure, which can possibly be attended with such hope of success, as placing them in hospitals appropriated to this purpose. Nay indeed, when there appears no prospect of a cure at all, to provide for them as incurables is a most useful and excellent act of humanity: and the beginnings, lately made, of a provision of this sort, well deserve encouragement, and peculiarly want it.

The only kind of charity, which remains to be mentioned now, is that of houses of correction and work for the dissolute and idle. The terror, which these places strike, is one great benefit: as it prevents, at once, both crimes and the consequences of them. But where that proves ineffectual, the next advantage of such houses is, that offenders can be immediately secured in them: removed out of the

* See Dr. Alured Clarke's Sermon before the Governors of the County Hospital at Winchester, and an Account of the Establishment of that Hospital, published in 1737.

way of endangering the properties, the lives, the virtue of others: and made to feel, that their attempt of gaining a livelihood by easier methods than honest people do, shall only subject them to harder labour, and deserved punishment. Many of them, we are assured, have been brought by these means to a just sense of their interest and their duty. Very many more, we have sad experience, much need to have this kindness done them. And we cannot but know the importance, both to them and to ourselves, of checking the growth of wickedness, before it is quite too late to think of attempting it.

These then being the methods of charity now before you; consider well, what obligations you are under, as *stewards of God* for the good of your fellow-creatures, to assist in directing and supporting them.

Such, in the first place, as are qualified to govern and direct any of these institutions, are bound in conscience, not to let so excellent designs receive prejudice, for want of a succession of fit persons to put them in execution. For they may well spare a little time, both from pleasure, and from business of other kinds; to employ it in a manner, so productive of happiness to the world, and to themselves. And such as have actually taken this good work upon them, must ever remember, that they are now become stewards of the charity of men, as well as the bounty of God: and their faithfulness in the discharge of their trust is engaged to both. They, whose constant attendance cannot be expected, should at least acquaint themselves so far with the management of things, as to know, and be able to assure others, that it is, in the main at least, such as it ought: for, in many cases, this alone

may be a valuable service. And all, who profess to enter further into the conduct of affairs, should seriously, and frequently, and impartially, consider, what can be reformed in these charities, and what can be improved. A meddling spirit, fond of disturbing things that are well, either to no good purpose, or none that can be obtained, is indeed a very mischievous one: but prudent, peaceable endeavours, to make every thing as perfect as it can be made, are of incredible use. The work, in which you are engaged, is a very important one: and a small defect of attention, a little wrong bias or mistaken judgment, may produce extremely unhappy effects: may diminish considerably the benefit of these excellent designs, and make even *your good evil-spoken of**. The support of voluntary charities depends entirely on their reputation: and therefore it concerns you greatly, to avoid, not only every thing blamable, but every thing suspicious; and to *cut off occasion from them which desire occasion*† to find fault, *providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but in the sight of all men*‡. But more especially give me leave to recommend to you, that as you are intrusted for the good of your fellow-creatures, you would have great regard to their eternal good: and that, as you are employed for the service of God, you would express your concern for his honour, by endeavouring conscientiously to imprint a sense of religion and virtue upon all that come under your care in these places. It is the want of religion and virtue, that principally occasions this dreadful number of distresses and disorders in the world: and so long as the cause subsists the effect will follow. Let your children therefore be carefully bred up to piety, with-

* Rom. xiv. 16. † 2 Cor. xi. 12. ‡ 2 Cor. viii. 21.

out superstition or uncharitableness; to loyalty, and honesty; to humility, and industry. Let your sick be instructed and admonished, suitably to their capacities, their present condition, and past behaviour. And let the correction of your offenders be made as medicinal as it can: and a charitable care for reclaiming them, by proper expostulations, and friendly advice, be joined with whatever severity it is necessary they should undergo. There are undoubtedly amongst them great objects of pity; persons, of whom there is no cause to despair: and surely these, as far as it is possible, should have some distinguished regard shewn them. But so much regard at least should be shewn to them all, and to the public at the same time, if we have any concern for its welfare; as never to suffer places, appointed for the punishment of wickedness, to become schools for learning it.

And now, having taken upon me to say thus much to you, it is but justice to add, that exhortations by no means imply distrust. *Having confidence in thy obedience*, saith St. Paul to Philemon, *I write unto thee, knowing, that thou wilt also do more than I say* *. And never can there be better ground for a confidence of this kind, than at present: when these charities are conducted by so large a number of good, and wise, and experienced men, under the inspection of a magistracy so worthy of honour; and over which presides a person †, whose uncommon abilities we all see exercised every day, for the promotion of religion and virtue, of the peace and good order, the welfare and happiness of this great city, with the most exemplary disinterestedness, and the

* Philem. ver. 21. † Sir John Barnard.

truest prudence, the most active zeal, and the tenderest humanity.

I proceed therefore now, with great satisfaction, from the duty of managing these charities well, to that of supporting them. And one way of supporting them is, by speaking of them with the esteem which they deserve. These public institutions, and some of them more especially, have had vehement accusations brought against them by many persons. But stay to enquire, and hear, before you condemn. You may possibly judge wrong, concerning what ought to be done: and you may very probably be misinformed, concerning what is done. Things which have happened very seldom, if at all, may be told as happening frequently. Mistakes corrected long ago, may be charged as continuing still. Inconveniences may be unjustly heightened: advantages unjustly depreciated. Should this be so; and should the things, against which you are declaiming, be all the while excellently good ones: think only, what harm you are doing to mankind. Perhaps indeed, nay certainly, they are not perfect. But are they not highly useful? Or if not, cannot they be made so? If they can, use your endeavours that they may. Shew a good meaning, and you will acquire an influence. But even should you after all be unsuccessful; still reflect a second time: is it not more eligible, that these institutions should continue as they are, than fall to ruin? For, supposing some better way might be contrived; is there any certainty, is there any prospect, of this better way being taken? And if not; never pull down, till you are likely to build again.

But affording good words alone to charity, is very

insufficient. As faithful stewards of the divine bounty, you must communicate of the wealth also, which is placed in your hands for that purpose; *and minister, as of the ability which God giveth* *. The importance of supporting these methods of doing good, so far as it appears from their general nature, you have already heard. But when you are acquainted also with their large and increasing extent, and their necessary dependence on new benefactions every year; these things will be weighty additional motives to your liberality: and I intreat your compassionate attention to the following report of them.

Here the report was read.

You have now heard the most forcible arguments, that you well can hear, for contributing plentifully to the charities before you. Eight hundred vagrants and disorderly persons, confined and employed, relieved and corrected, for their own reformation, and your security: thirteen hundred poor children maintained, taught their duty to God and man, and qualified for usefulness to the public: thirteen thousand sick persons, of whom care hath been taken in their sickness. And these excellent establishments, you perceive at the same time, cannot subsist without continual help: though, would but your bounty afford the means for it, they are capable of being greatly enlarged. Still a provision is wanted for multitudes of poor children: and no small part of them are either taught, or reduced, to get a livelihood by wickedness and dishonesty. Still too many offenders, of more advanced years, infest your streets. And a very large proportion of the sick, that apply to

* 1 Pet. iv. 11.

your hospitals, are forced to be rejected, and left in their misery, for want of room to receive them, or income to support them. Think then what is incumbent on you in relation to these things.

There are but two reasons, and they are both very bad ones, that hinder men from being charitable according to their power: either covetousness makes them unwilling; or expensiveness makes them imagine they are unable.

If the former influences you; consider well, that your happiness for ever depends on doing your duty: but your happiness even here doth not depend on enlarging your fortunes. You may, if you will form yourselves to it, enjoy great satisfaction in doing good. But what felicity can you possibly find, either in the consciousness of having, or the vanity of being known to have, ever so much wealth more than you have any occasion for? And besides, if the enjoyment of *man's life* did *consist in the abundance of the things which he possessed* *: charity may often be so contrived by prudence, as not to diminish wealth; and is often so blessed by Heaven, as greatly to increase it. I am sensible, that you have heard these things, till some of you perhaps have brought yourselves by degrees to be very little moved by them: but remember, God will expect, that having been reminded of them so frequently, you should regard them the more.

And if it be expensiveness, that withholds you from charity; in this case also think with yourselves: for which purpose is it, that your Maker hath intrusted you? for vices and follies, or for pity and mercy? You may indeed plead, that luxury, by the numbers it employs, is perhaps the most exten-

* Luke xii. 15.

sive beneficence. But this is a poor pretence, evidently calculated to make yourselves easy in acting wrong. Undoubtedly the wisdom of Providence hath contrived, that many, who will do no good in any other way, shall however do some in this. But then it is usually done to those who need it least. A number of persons, well able to take care of themselves otherwise, are maintained, part in idleness, part in professions of no manner of use; whilst the true objects of compassion, the infirm and helpless, are left unregarded to suffer and perish. Luxury therefore contributes nothing to answer the intent of the charities before us. And even those, for whom it doth provide, it teaches at the same time to ruin themselves by the imitation of it. And in proportion as it prevails, it destroys every where, both virtue and happiness, public and private. But the numberless evils of this most fatal vice cannot be enlarged on now: and if the very little good, which it doth, were very much more; yet, as no one will pretend to say, that this good was the motive to his expensiveness; it can never be a defence of it. We must not therefore think to make our extravagance an excuse for the defect of our alms; or hope in the least to mend our plea, by calling those things necessaries of life, which are indeed very blamable superfluities.

Let therefore both the frugal and the expensive man seriously consider, one, what proportion his charity bears to his increase: the other, to his profusions: and each think of justifying themselves, not to the world, but to God.

Possibly it may seem a good reason to some, for their own neglect of the poor, that the law makes provision for them. And it is certainly an honour to the law, that it doth: but no honour to us, that it

needs do it. Besides, there are very many cases of great distress, to which legal provision is neither easily nor properly extended: nor can it give by any means so plentiful relief, as should be given to the greater part of those, to whom it may extend. But suppose the law capable of doing every thing that needs be done: what would be the consequence of leaving every thing to it? That we should lose entirely the means, which now we have, of proving to the world, and to ourselves, the goodness of our own hearts; and of making an undoubted free-will offering to God, out of what he hath given us. Persons of bad minds may indeed take occasion to neglect the poor, from our willingness to relieve them: and thus, by their fault, the burden may fall heavier upon us than it ought. But then God, who hath intrusted us, not only in conjunction with others to do our share, but separately by ourselves to do what we can, *is not unrighteous to forget this our labour of love* *: but will take abundant care, that whatever we bear cheerfully on his account, far from giving us cause of complaint, shall assuredly be matter of great joy to us in the end.

Think then attentively of these considerations. They are not proposed to you, for raising a sudden warmth of affection, and serving a present turn: it is to your coolest reason, that this address is made. Reflect in retirement on what you have heard. Act upon deliberate conviction, act from a settled principle, in what you do: from that sublime principle, to which St. Peter directs in the next verse after the text; *that God may be glorified in all things, through Jesus Christ:* that you may express to him your sense of the duty and gratitude, which you owe him;

* Heb. vi. 10.

that you may improve your own hearts, by imitating the goodness, which you honour; that you may convince mankind of the excellency of the Christian doctrine. Consider yourselves, in this view also, as the *stewards of God:* as intrusted for the service and promotion of his Gospel. For be assured, such important and astonishing truths as that comprehends, and you have lately heard out of it, were not made known to you, with a design, that you should be indifferent about them; but deeply affected by them yourselves, and seriously diligent to engage the attention of others to them. If then you have any zeal for the faith, which you profess, as Heaven knows there never was more need: shew men, by its effects, what it is; and give demonstration to the world, how far the true charity of a good Christian goes beyond the boasted benevolence of unbelievers. Invite men by these means to a better opinion of religion: encourage them by the same to a steadier practice of it. *Be watchful, and strengthen,* by every method you can, *the things which remain and are ready to die* *: but particularly make provision in these excellent ways, which are now proposed to you, for the instruction of the ignorant, the conversion of the vicious, the spiritual improvement, as well as temporal relief of the sick: that so *the administration* of your charity *may not only supply the want of the saints, but be abundant also by many thanksgivings to God* †.

* Rev. iii. 2. † 2 Cor. ix. 12.

SERMON V.

PREACHED BEFORE THE HOUSE OF LORDS IN THE ABBEY-CHURCH OF WESTMINSTER, ON THURSDAY, MAY 29, 1739.

PSALM CVI. 12, 13.

Then believed they his words, they sang his praise: they soon forgat his works, they waited not for his counsel.

THE same wise and good Being, who hath fitted the whole frame of this world to the various wants of his creatures; hath fitted the events of things to our reformation and moral improvement. Were they to be considered as events only, it would be folly not to learn from them: but as they are lessons intended by heaven for our instruction, it is impiety also. The dispensations of Providence, in which we are least interested, may teach us a great deal by analogy, both concerning the consequences of our behaviour, and the temper of our hearts: for we seldom apprehend how fatally we are capable of erring, till we see how other persons have acted before us, and what hath followed. But those transactions of former times, which extend their influence down to us, as they naturally excite a greater attention, so they generally reward it with more plentiful and more important matter of observation: and if

we will not be made wise by the experience of our predecessors; the only doubt is, whether possibly our own may not teach us too late.

The two great methods of providential instruction are mercies and punishments. Undoubtedly our Maker would always prefer the first; if it were not that enjoying them for some time, without interruption, tempts us unaccountably to overlook, both his goodness, and our own duty arising from it. Sometimes indeed they, who forget God in their prosperity, are moved by their afflictions only to murmur against him: but for the most part sufferings have a better effect; recall to our minds both our condition and our conduct. And it might be hoped, that the very deep impressions, which divine judgments make, would naturally be lasting; or however, that when forgiveness had succeeded chastisement, the united force of terror and gratitude would be perpetual. To recollect our past deliverances, and dwell upon the thoughts of our present happiness, appears too pleasing an employment to grow wearisome. Considering both, as evidences of God's delight to do us good, must surely heighten our relish of them: and preserving in memory our obligation to a proper return, besides its being agreeable to ingenuous minds, one should imagine, would be sufficiently recommended to us, by our knowing, that the continuance of our blessings depends on this condition.

But mankind are strangely different in fact from what speculation may represent them. Be the advantages of their condition ever so great, many will attend only to its inconveniences: and seem as if they had rather be miserable, than not be ungrateful. Others are too intent on the enjoyment of their felicity, ever to think, to whom they owe it; or

think too much of the visible means, to remember the invisible Author. And unhappily, they who have the liveliest sense of the goodness of God, seldom retain it long: *they sing his praise, and soon forget his works.* Favours, received personally by ourselves, wear out of our minds in a very little time: but mercies derived to us from a former age, though continuing to subsist in full force, though perhaps improved, affect us no otherwise than the blessing of constant health doth; which tempts many to be irregular, for one whom it makes thankful. Then, to complete the unhappiness, some who preserve the most lasting memory of divine favours, remember them often partially, and to bad purposes: deduce from them wrong conclusions, and are led by them into unjustifiable behaviour. Though they do not *forget his works, they wait not for his counsel:* but inconsiderately follow their own imaginations: or if instruction forces itself upon them, *they will not abide it* *; nor bear to be restrained, even by the voice of Heaven.

Now the obvious method of securing events of importance, both from oblivion and misconstruction, is by appointing stated and solemn commemorations of them. God himself hath done this, to preserve a just sense of his works of creation and redemption: but the celebration of his providential goodness he hath left, as it was natural, to human care. And serious care ought to be taken; as on the one hand, that institutions of this kind be neither debased to low occasions, nor perverted to ill uses: so on the other, that *they, whom the Lord hath redeemed and delivered from the hand of the enemy, may offer unto him the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and tell out his works*

* So the old translation.

with gladness; exalt him in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the seat of the elders *.

This is the duty, which we are now assembled to perform: and the two things, requisite to perform it as we ought, are,

I. To consider the nature of the blessing, which we commemorate:

II. The behaviour, to which it directs us.

I. In speaking of the blessings on this day restored to us, as preceding evils must unavoidably be mentioned: and all persons ought to bear with the mention of what all contributed to, and shared in. To whom the chief load of guilt was imputable, the public voice hath most justly declared; but every order of men was blamable, and every order punished. *First*, a zeal excessively angry, for it must be acknowledged, was shewn in the church, against a very provoking sect of zealots: and illegal powers were exercised, to a dangerous degree, in the State; when the bounds of legal power were less clearly fixed. Then fears and resentments carried good men too far; and gave bad men an opportunity of leading them insensibly further still, by very wicked arts: till they were neither sure of retreating with safety, nor yet could go forward without great guilt. Concessions were made them, in some cases too large; in most, if not all, very sufficient. But these came too late. The minds of men were exasperated, and confidence in each other lost: so that, instead of reconciling, they only gave ground of advantage for adding new demands, which the makers of them well knew, could not be granted. Insisting however that they should, from discontents they broke out into tumults; and tumults

* Psal. cvii. 2. 22. 32.

soon heightened into open rebellion. To have lived in *these beginnings of sorrows* * must have been very dreadful; but how much more, when discord had brought forth its perfect work; had involved the three nations in bloodshed, and the numberless distresses, that belong to civil wars? After infinite sacrilege and devastation, committed under colour of religion and freedom, war indeed ceased for a time: but the fruits of war continued. The primitive form of our ecclesiastical government was illegally abolished: the universities, the clergy, the body of the people most cruelly oppressed; till one part of the conquerors attempting to extend their oppression over the rest, they took a desperate resolution, with which they persuaded each other Heaven had inspired them, to establish themselves by overturning the whole. Then the majesty of the crown, the honours of the nobility, the privileges of the commons, fell a promiscuous sacrifice, as the church had done before, to enthusiastic fury. Fresh commotions and a new effusion of blood attended this catastrophe. The subverters of lawful authority by force, underwent repeated subversions of their own one by another: the patrons of unbounded liberty sunk under the dominion of absolute tyranny: the asserters of an imaginary purity in religion, promoted its being defiled with pernicious corruptions: and, by a most instructive severity of Providence, all in their turns were made to *eat the fruit of their own way, and were filled with their own devices* †, to so surprising a degree of exactness; that there was not perhaps any one ill thing, which either side did, but the justice of God returned it visibly upon them.

* Mark xiii. 8. † Prov. i. 31.

Such was the state of our ancestors for many years: groaning under their present evils, and *their hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which were coming on the earth* *. But most unexpectedly, when all attempts for restoring our government and laws had proved ineffectual; when the few remaining defenders of them had neither strength of their own, nor hope of assistance from abroad; when their opposers had all the power of the nation in their hands; and, however divided amongst themselves, were engaged by principle and interest, by fear and hatred, to support their common cause: then did God *bow the heart of his people, even as the heart of one man* †, to recall their exiled sovereign, and re-establish their ancient constitution in Church and State. *The merciful and gracious Lord hath so done his marvellous works, that they ought to be had in remembrance* ‡. *Praised be the Lord daily: even the God who helpeth us, and poureth his benefits upon us* §.

But great as this deliverance was; yet every fibre of such *a root of bitterness* ‖ could not be extirpated immediately: and a new evil *sprung up* from it, which once more threatened us with ruin. Our princes, deprived in their tender years of the instruction and example of their royal father, banished into the midst of temptation, and seeing and feeling the terrible effects of a pretended or misguided zeal for our liberties and religion; returned to us with dispositions unfavourable to both. These, in the reign of the younger of them, had reduced us to the very extremity of danger: when the mercy of Providence, again interposing, delivered us; and not

* Luke xxi. 26. † 2 Sam. xix. 41. ‡ Psal. cxi. 4.
§ Psal. lxviii. 19. ‖ Heb. xii. 15.

only completed, but we hope hath secured to us for ever, the whole blessing of the Restoration, under our present happy establishment. Our sovereign, we are sure, hath the sincerest regard both to our civil and religious rights: his posterity have deeply imbibed the same generous principle: and all, that we can have to fear, must be from ourselves.

II. Let us therefore proceed to consider, what behaviour the great event, which we commemorate, prescribes: what is the *counsel*, which God hath given us by it.

The greatest part of the instruction indeed must arise from our sufferings: but the whole power of making advantage of it, arises from our deliverance. And our sufferings being caused by mutual vehemence, and our deliverance being effected in peace: both may well dispose us to a mild consideration of what they teach. To make invectives now, against persons who are gone long ago to answer for their sins before God, can be of little benefit: and to charge others rashly with inheriting their faults, may be great injustice: besides that generosity should restrain one side from bitterness; and decency, the other. Undoubtedly caution, to prevent the repetition of past evils, is highly requisite. But where so large a proportion of them was brought about by such as meant it not, the most needful caution is, that we each of us avoid falling into the same error: that we recollect, whatever our station or profession be, not only the injuries, which our predecessors in the same underwent, but chiefly those which they did; and apply our knowledge of former times, not to exasperate others, but to amend or warn ourselves. This is the use, which ought to be made of the plainest parts of the history: and much more should

we take care not to grow warm about the doubtful ones: but allowing men to differ from us, as they may very innocently, concerning the characters and conduct of persons and parties formerly, endeavour all to agree in the one material point, our own conduct now. And surely the period of time before our view, suggests very plainly most important directions to every sort of persons amongst us.

It must remind the governors of the established Church, that rigorous treatment of such as dissent from it, and endeavours to extend their own authority, or influence, beyond reasonable bounds, are methods as contrary to prudence, as they are to religion: that neither learning, nor piety, nor eminence in other virtues, will be able to support them, without a suitable degree of humility and forbearance; but that care to be inoffensive, and diligence to be useful, are their true strength. And at the same time, they, who are prejudiced against the established Church, ought to remember, that its ruin was attended with that of the whole constitution: that there followed in its place, first another church-power, allowed to be much more terrible; then all manner of confusion: and this continued, till Providence re-established us on the old foundation. So that even in those times their schemes were far from producing any good: and it cannot be fitting to revive them now; when, God be thanked, there never was so little of the bad spirit, which they pretend to fear. We do not desire to oppress: we do not desire to be formidable. We only desire protection and support in serving the cause of religion and virtue: and it is a very unkind and discouraging return made us, for avoiding the faults imputed to

our predecessors; if some will not see it, and others will give us no proof of their seeing it.

From the occurrences of the same times, counsellors of princes ought to learn, that the greatest interest of the sovereign and their own is, never to bear hard upon the liberties of the people; for they will restore themselves with dangerous force: never to give them jealousy; never to despise even their less reasonable complaints; but, as far as it is possible, always promote the public good by methods agreeable to the public inclination. And the several parts of the legislature should learn, each to maintain their own privileges with calm resolution; but to abstain religiously from mutual encroachments: for not only the sacred obligation of justice requires it; but experience hath shewn, that when once the inward balance of a constitution is broken, endless disorders are likely to follow: and no part of the whole is in danger of suffering more, than that which at first appeared to be the gainer.

But besides the separate admonitions, given by the history of this day to particular sorts of persons; the instruction, which it offers to us all in common, deserves our serious attention.

Much of the misery, undergone by these nations, was owing to that unhappy proneness, which there is in mankind, not only to magnify the real inconveniences of their condition, but to add imaginary ones to them. And their own ill conduct is always the last thing on which they charge them; that of their superiors, usually the first. For these inconveniences, they flatter themselves in the next place, there must be some remedy: and then, whatever scheme for reformation either their own imagination

presents, or any body else suggests, they embrace it immediately, run hastily away with it; and soon grow too vehement, ever to consider, whether it be not impracticable or ineffectual, unjust or pernicious. Indeed to be absolutely against all changes, is either great folly, or great wickedness. Things may have been wrong constituted originally: they may have degenerated since: they may be attended now with different circumstances; and alterations may both be reasonable to cure present complaints, and necessary to prevent worse disorders. But still the general presumption should always be in favour of what is established: and no innovations, greater than need, ought ever to be attempted. Interest, opinion, resentment, warmth of temper, place different things before different persons, in very strong lights: too strong perhaps to see them distinctly; at least, to observe every thing connected with them. On these views however they boldly act: heat one another, sometimes by concurrence, sometimes by opposition: doubt nothing in themselves, suspect nothing in those who join with them, pardon nothing in those who differ from them: destroy the quiet of numbers who have not deserved it, as well as their own: and all to do mischief, it may be, instead of good; even though they intend good. For not only projects, that look plausible to such persons, may be very hurtful notwithstanding; perhaps to themselves, perhaps to others, who have an equal right to be considered: but supposing them innocent, supposing them beneficial; yet attempting them rashly, may do unknown harm, should they miscarry; and cost infinitely too dear, should they succeed. If a nation is to be put into a ferment for them; and the multitude called in, to be vehement about matters, of

which they are no judges: this in itself is a dreadful evil; and may possibly rise to a destructive height. For in some circumstances it is much easier to inflame persons, than to foresee when they will cool: and there is one point of yet greater importance than reforming faults, preserving reverence to authority. If this be once lost, possibly a blameless conduct of affairs, which yet nobody can ever promise, may not restore it: and unless it be restored, every thing will be levelled. Sooner or later indeed, God knows how long it may be first, some sort of order must return: but, without the peculiar interposition of a kind Providence, the beautiful order of a free government will not. And it ought to be well considered, that persons who begin with moderate and most laudable intentions, may forget themselves, may be entangled with others, may be led or driven into doing what they greatly disapprove; or may lose all power of stopping mischief, when it is once set to work; and have nothing left, but to perish with the ship, in the storm which they have helped to raise. These dangers indeed cannot be reasons for complying with every thing: for in vain will Heaven have restored to us our happy form of government, if we suffer it to be a form only. But they are powerful reasons for thinking coolly what deserves opposition, and opposing it with temper: for considering who are the persons really to blame, in what degree upon the whole they are so, and how difficult it is not to be so: for redressing grievances by no other than regular methods; and waiting for opportunities, not forcing them: for examining faithfully the purity of our own intentions; for asking ourselves often, how far we mean to go; and observing carefully, what those persons aim at, with whom we

are engaged: for weighing well what remedies the public constitution will bear, under what it will be likely to sink; and seriously recollecting, how great multitudes have their fate involved in that of the whole. There can be no cautions more evidently just than these; though we had not had experience to teach us so awfully, that for want of regarding them in the times now before us, no one scheme ended as it was designed at first. Every thing was proposed to be reformed into perfection: every thing, instead of that, was completely brought to ruin: and happy did men think themselves, with very good cause, when at last they were able to get back into the situation, which they had imagined before to be so intolerable. *Now all these things happened unto them, for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition* *.

Nor let it be replied, that though the bold attempts for reformation and liberty miscarried then, they may succeed another time. Let us rather reflect, that though the confusion and slavery, which they introduced, proved but temporary then, the next trial may perpetuate them. Liberty is a blessing of such unspeakable value, that no wonder if the very name of it be dear to men: but the name misapplied was fatal to our forefathers; and may be so to us. Licentiousness of speech and writing, a favourite and most entertaining species of liberty to the inconsiderate, had the effects amongst them, which it must have every where; not only of injuring particular persons in the most sensible manner; but of destroying that regard to stations and offices, ranks and orders of men, which must be preserved, or society must be dissolved. For when once con-

* 1 Cor. x. 11.

tending parties, by their mutual accusations and aspersions, have taught the people to think ill, or meanly, of all persons that are, or can be their governors; what remains for them, but to think in the same manner of government itself, and treat it accordingly? Considering indeed, how artfully men have learnt to disguise these enormities, there may perhaps be no effectual method of restraining them by law, without very great danger of hurtful consequences from the restraint. But to take this advantage for being guilty of them, is a most ungenerous use of freedom against such as wish it well; and a most unwise one, against such as do not. All good men therefore should labour unanimously to keep down this bad spirit, each on his own side; for in vain do we exclaim against what we indulge: and to discountenance it so strongly by expressing their private abhorrence of it, that there may be no reason, and no pretence, if possible, for a public provision against it. Liberty cannot be supported, any more than power, but by exercising it with moderation. And they that overturn either, by carrying it to extravagant heights, after such warning as Providence hath given us, must neither expect any remedy, nor much pity.

But indeed there are persons, who seem almost to think, that liberty cannot be extended too far; that every diminution of authority is so much gain, every increase of it so much loss, to the community. Now if this be true, laws and government are a public nuisance. And if not, men ought to consider, what restraints are requisite, as well as what may be abused; and remember, that a right to do things, necessary to be done, must be vested somewhere, and must be exerted. Authority indeed is of a

growing nature: but so is aversion to authority: and freedom unrestrained is power unrestrained. No tyrannies have been more insupportable, than those of the multitude: nor can any persons be more justly dreaded, than they who declaim for liberty, in the spirit of persecution; and demand it with insolence, in the midst of the enjoyment of it. Such behaviour plainly shews, that not content with being free, they want to rule: and since they cannot plead, that any harsh treatment hath provoked them to these outrages; they are so far less excuseable, than some of their predecessors in the times of our troules.

But however strongly we are cautioned against licentiousness, by the sufferings of former days; there hath arisen notwithstanding in our own, one very shocking kind of it, almost peculiar to this nation: that of publicly treating religion with contempt; and after magnifying morals, merely in opposition to it, explaining them away to just nothing. Setting the world at large in these respects, appears to be a principal point, which some have at heart: whose character in Scripture might surely have given a more general suspicion of them, than it hath: that *while they promise others liberty, they are themselves the servants of corruption* *. And too many, who have no design of contributing to the progress of irreligion, see it however with great tranquillity. Let men think, let men act, just as they will, provided they are not bigots, but persons of free principles; the public is safe, and all is well. But is it safe, that they should be bigots to atheism, bigots to profligateness? Or can it be a matter of indifference, whether they have a good and right rule of

* 2 Pet. ii. 19.

conduct though it were with some mistakes; or whether they have none at all, or a quite wrong one? We own that false notions about religion were one great cause of the sufferings of this nation. But so were false notions about freedom, another. And why are mistakes, or even wilful abuses, a reason for trampling upon the former, when they are not thought a reason against exalting the latter without bounds? We own, that superstition and enthusiasm ought to be guarded against: and that this is a most important lesson of Providence to us, on this day. But it cannot be right to guard against them, by rooting out of men's minds the reverence due to the Author of Nature: or by taking methods, which, in the natural course of things, will bring one or both of them back upon us, as perhaps we have begun to experience; or at least will bring evils, not less formidable. Public happiness cannot subsist, without social virtue and moral self-government: nor can either of these subsist, without regard to God. Nothing, but the thought of his seeing and rewarding, can possibly have force sufficient, in all cases, to restrain men's passions, to counterbalance their present interests; to excite the indolent, keep the enterprizing within due bounds, and unite all in making the common good their common end.

We shall therefore neglect the most important of the *counsels* of Providence on this day, if we learn not, from so instructive a dispensation of it, that just sense of our duty to the Governor and Lawgiver of the world, which if our forefathers had preserved, these miseries had never happened; and if we preserve, they will never happen more. For as, on the one hand, religion enforces powerfully that necessary caution, expressed by the prophet Ezra; *Seeing thou*

our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this: should we again break thy commandments, wouldst thou not be angry with us, till thou hadst consumed us ?* So on the other, it supports us with that noble confidence, expressed by the prophet Samuel: *Fear not: but serve the Lord with all your heart: for the Lord will not forsake his people, for his great name's sake. Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth: for consider, how great things he hath done for you* †.

* Ezra. ix. 13, 14. † 1 Sam. xii. 20. 22. 24.

SERMON VI.

PREACHED BEFORE THE INCORPORATED SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL IN FOREIGN PARTS, IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. MARY-LE-BOW, ON FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1740—1.

MARK vi. 34.

And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people: and was moved with compassion towards them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.

THIS passage of the evangelist expresses, in so strong and engaging a manner, the benevolent temper of our blessed Lord, and his tender regard to the spiritual wants of men, that, if we suffer our minds to dwell upon it awhile, it cannot fail of exciting the same disposition in us: especially if we consider, that the view, which he is here described to have had, of their destitute condition, not only induced him *to teach them* himself *many things* concerning *the kingdom of God* *; but caused that most serious reflection and exhortation, *The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest* †: immediately after which he sent forth *his twelve disciples* to preach the Gos-

* Luke ix. 11. † Math. ix. 36—38.

pel *; as he did the *seventy* at another time, on the very same motive, mentioned by another evangelist in the very same words †: thus opening the way, by his previous care of *the lost sheep of the house of Israel* ‡, for uniting us all into *one fold under one shepherd* ‖.

To carry on the great work which he began, of directing mankind to present and future happiness, is the end of this society: incorporated by a prince, to whom religion and liberty will have eternal obligations; and established, first for the support of Christianity in our colonies and factories abroad, then for the propagation of it amongst the heathens intermixed with them, and bordering upon them; but taking its name from the remoter and more extensive part of the design.

Every possible reason required our predecessors in this excellent undertaking to begin with inspecting the state of the English plantations in America. And nothing could be more applicable to them on that occasion, than the words of the text: *They saw much people, and were moved with compassion towards them: because they were as sheep not having a shepherd.* The European inhabitants there being private adventurers, neither numerous, nor rich, nor certain of success, nor unanimous in belief, established in several provinces no form whatever of public worship and instruction. Too many of them carried but little sense of Christianity abroad with them: a great part of the rest suffered it to wear out gradually: and their children grew of course to have yet less than they: till in some countries there were scarce any

* Matth. x. 1.
† Luke x. 1, 2.
‡ Matt. x. 6.
‖ John x. 15.

footsteps of it left, beyond the mere name. No teacher was known, no religious assembly held; the Lord's day distinguished only by more dissoluteness; the sacrament of baptism not administered for near twenty years together, nor that of the Lord's Supper for near sixty, amongst many thousands of people, who did not deny the obligation of these duties, but lived notwithstanding in a stupid neglect of them. Such was the state of things in more of our colonies than one: and where it was a little better, it was however lamentably bad. Some persons appear very desirous of seeing, what sort of creatures men would be without the knowledge of God. Here a sufficient trial was made of this: and it shewed to an unhappy degree of certainty, that they would be wicked, and profligate, and brutal in every respect, and return in a few generations to entire barbarism. Possibly indeed they might have been delivered from this evil, by that of popery; which, always taking advantage of ignorance and profaneness, had already begun to spread: and dreadful was the alternative of one or the other. In these circumstances, the poor inhabitants made, from all parts, the most affecting representations of their deplorable condition: the truth of which was but too fully confirmed by their respective governors, and the persons of principal note in each province. There could not be worthier objects of regard, than such complainants. And if they, who remained insensible, did not deserve pity so much, they wanted it still more. The Society therefore, in proportion to their own ability, and the need of each place, first sent over missionaries, to perform the offices of religion amongst them; then schoolmasters, to instruct their children

in the principles of it; who, after *enduring much contradiction of sinners* *, and going through a great variety of labours and difficulties, have, through the blessing of God, made a remarkable change in the face of things; and laid a noble ground-work, of what, we hope, will every day be carried on towards perfection. But at present much remains to be done. Multitudes continue, as before, in a thoughtless disregard to almost every part of Christianity: and multitudes also are daily petitioning for help; which to some we cannot give at all; and to others so little, that they have divine service only once in many weeks; and several districts of sixty, seventy, and eighty miles long, have but one minister to officiate in each of them.

The next object of the Society's concern, were the poor negroes. These unhappy wretches learn, in their native country, the grossest idolatry, and the most savage dispositions; and then are sold to the best purchaser: sometimes by their enemies, who would else put them to death; sometimes by their nearest friends, who are either unable or unwilling to maintain them. Their condition in our colonies, though it cannot well be worse than it would have been at home, is yet nearly as hard as possible: their servitude most laborious, their punishments most severe. And thus many thousands of them spend their whole days, one generation after another, undergoing with reluctant minds continual toil in this world, and comforted with no hopes of reward in a better. For it is not to be expected, that masters, too commonly negligent of Christianity themselves, will take much pains to teach it their slaves: whom even the better part of them are in a great measure habituated to con-

* Heb. xii. 3.

sider, as they do their cattle, merely with a view to the profit arising from them. Not a few therefore have openly opposed their instruction; from an imagination, now indeed proved and acknowledged to be groundless, that baptism would entitle them to freedom. Others, by obliging them to work on Sundays to provide themselves necessaries, leave them neither time to learn religion, nor any prospect of being able to subsist, if once the duty of resting on that day makes part of their belief. And some, it may be feared, have been averse to their becoming Christians, because, after that, no pretence will remain for not treating them like men. When these obstacles are added to the fondness they have for their old heathenish rites, and the strong prejudices they must have against teachers from among those, whom they serve so unwillingly; it cannot be wondered, if the progress made in their conversion prove but slow. After some experience of this, catechists were appointed in two places, by way of trial, for their instruction alone: whose success, where it was least, hath not been inconsiderable; and so great in the plantations belonging to the Society, that out of two hundred and thirty, at least seventy are now believers in Christ. And there is lately an improvement to this scheme begun to be executed, by qualifying and employing young negroes, prudently chosen, to teach their countrymen: from which, in the opinion of the best judges, we may reasonably promise ourselves that this miserable people, the generality of whom have hitherto *sat in darkness, will see great light* *.

There still remains another branch of the Society's care, the Indians bordering on our settlements. These consist of various nations, valuable for some of their

* Matth. v. 16.

qualities, but immersed in the vilest superstitions, and engaged in almost perpetual wars against each other, which they prosecute with barbarities unheard of amongst the rest of mankind: implacable in their resentments, when once provoked; boundless in their intemperance, when they have opportunities for it, and at such times mischievous to the highest degree: impatient of labour, to procure themselves the common conveniences of life; inhumanly negligent of persons in years; and, if accounts of such things may be credited, not scrupling to kill and eat their nearest relations, when the long expeditions, which they make, for hunting, or against enemies, have reduced them to straights. Now these poor creatures also, diligent endeavours have been used to enlighten and reclaim, on such occasions, and by such methods, as were least suspicious. For, without due precautions, harm would be done, instead of good, where natural jealousy is so industriously fomented by an artful neighbour. And, after all precautions, it cannot be an easy work, to convert nations, whose manners are so uncultivated; whose languages are so different, so hard to learn, and so little adapted to the doctrines of religion; with whom we scarce ever contract affinities: and who seldom continue long enough in the same place, to let any good impressions fix into habits. Yet, notwithstanding these difficulties, which frustrated formerly a very expensive attempt, another hath been made of late; and through the blessing of God, hath so reformed and improved the morals, together with the notions, of one Indian tribe *, that we cannot but hope the rest will be in-

* The Mohawks: who compose two Christian congregations, each consisting of above 200 persons. Their schoolmaster is a Mohawk. There are also some converts amongst the Oneidan and Tuscararo Indians.

duced, by seeing their happiness, to follow their example.

You have now heard in brief the state of our colonies, with respect to religion. And were the prospect of further success much smaller than it is, yet our rule would be, to do our duty, and leave the event to Heaven. Persons of unwilling or desponding minds may easily find arguments to prove every good design unpromising, or even impracticable. But the natural dictate of piety and virtue is, to try. And the express command of our blessed Lord is, that *the Gospel be preached to every creature* *. Nor is only the offer of instruction to heathens, but the continuance of it for ever amongst Christians, the will of him, who, as *he gave some, apostles and evangelists,* gave *some* also, *pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, and the edifying of his body* †. By endeavouring to our power, that these things be done; we shall pay obedience to his authority, and imitate his example: we shall give a proof to our own hearts, that we are indeed his disciples; and convince the world, that zeal for religion is not yet extinguished: we shall habituate ourselves to the most amiable of virtues, good will to mankind in the most important of their interests: we shall serve the purposes of Providence; which have their accomplishment, *whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear* ‡: and how much soever we may *labour in vain* with respect to others; *yet our judgment will be with the Lord, and our work with our God* §.

But the same God hath promised, that his truth shall finally prevail upon earth. And though we cannot say, at what time, or by what degrees, this

* Mark xvi. 15. † Eph. iv. 11, 12.
‡ Ezek. ii. 5. § Isa. xlix. 5.

promise shall be fulfilled; yet, we have room to hope that every sincere endeavour is all along contributing something towards its completion. The good seed, which appears to lie dead for a while, will spring up in its season: that, which seems to shoot weakly at first, will gain strength insensibly, through the favourable influences of heaven: and *the grain of mustard seed become a tree* *. Thus have these colonies themselves grown: thus hath Christianity grown from its beginning, both in other places, and in them also: nor have we any reason to doubt its going on to do so still. In less than forty years, under many discouragements, and with an income very disproportionate to the vastness of the undertaking, a great deal hath been done: though little notice may have been taken of it, by persons unattentive to these things, or backward to acknowledge them. Near a hundred churches have been built; above ten thousand Bibles and Common Prayers, above a hundred thousand other pious tracts, distributed: great multitudes, upon the whole, of negroes and Indians brought over to the Christian faith; many numerous congregations have been set up, which now support the worship of God at their own expence, where it was not known before; and seventy persons are constantly employed, at the expence of the Society, in the farther service of the Gospel †. All this, we grant, makes but a small appearances in a tract of land, extending sixteen hundred miles. But it is an encouraging specimen, however, of what longer time and more liberal assistance may effect.

* Matth. xiii. 31, 32.

† Since the preaching of this sermon, all these numbers have been much increased. The missionaries, catechists, and schoolmasters are now, 1765, above 100.

Both the hopes, and the means of supporting Christianity amongst our own people there, are just the same as here at home. And though the negroes and Indians are prejudiced against it; and but poorly qualified, in comparison, to judge of the evidence of it: yet they and all men *have the work of the law written in their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness* *. They may be convicted but too easily of transgressing evident duties of nature: and when once they see their need of repentance and pardon, they will gladly receive the Gospel of Christ, of which these two are the more distinguishing articles. It will appear in itself infinitely preferable to what they have believed hitherto. The teachers of it will appear, both from their superior knowledge, and good lives, worthy of credit. The professors of it around them, will bear a testimony to it, in some respects the stronger, for their being often condemned by it. And if such arguments do not amount, after all, to the highest evidence: they afford however very rational motives of assent, especially to persons capable of no further information: and were these motives weaker than they are, yet the grace of God producing by them so powerful an effect on the minds of men, we undoubtedly approve ourselves, by proposing them, his ministers for the happiness of our fellow-creatures; and may justly *be confident, that he who hath begun a good work in them, will perform it* † perfectly.

But perhaps not our success, but the use and benefit of it, will be called in question. Now of this, we apprehend, there is abundant proof. The bare profession and outward appearance of such a religion, as the Christian is, if taught in any tolerable purity,

* Rom. ii. 15. † Phil. i. 6.

must have some right influence; and the body of a people cannot go the utmost lengths in wickedness, whilst that appearance subsists. What lengths they would go in time, if it were lost, as we have not experienced, we are not apt to consider. But a little reflection on the number and strength of human passions, and the abilities, which we have, of finding means to gratify them, would give us a high value of whatever hath any peculiar force to restrain them. The one institution of a day of holy rest, is not only, under prudent regulations, a great refreshment to the bulk of mankind; but greatly tends to civilize them also, by uniting neighbourhoods in formed assemblies, to acknowledge their common dependence on God, and relation to each other, with hearts disengaged from selfish attentions, and open to friendly regards. Nor is it possible, be they ever so negligent hearers of public worship and instruction, but considerable impressions, at least general ones, must remain upon their minds. And most evidently the impressions of religion dispose men to every thing productive of common good; to justice and veracity, and the reverence of an oath; without which the intercourse of man with man is not a moment safe: to faithfulness, duty, and love in the several relations of life; public and private: to mildness, charity, and compassion in their whole behaviour: to sobriety and industry, the pillars of national wealth and greatness: and to that joyful hope of a better world, which is our truest direction, and firmest support, in every stage of our journey through this. Many more persons will be thus influenced in various degrees, than are usually observed: for a regular, inoffensive behaviour affords little matter of speculation and discourse. And though still the generality may be bad;

yet, if left to themselves, they would certainly have been worse. Every body owns, that a wrong belief hath great power to deprave men's morals. Surely then a right one must have some power to reform them. And if not so much as might be wished; this is no more an argument against the usefulness of religion, than of reason: but a strong argument, why both should be cultivated to the utmost; and carefully applied to so important a purpose. If our colonies had not experienced great evils from the decay of Christianity amongst them; they would never have petitioned us so earnestly for instruction in it, as they have done. And if they had not experienced great good from the restoration of it, that earnestness would never have continued, as it doth, to this day.

Nor will our compliance with their request be a benefit only to them, but to this nation also. If they are dishonest and profligate: every single person here, who hath concerns with them, will be in danger of suffering by it. If they consume their wealth and their time in vices and follies; their trade will be gained over, from them and us, by our rivals and adversaries. And if the ties of a religion, binding men so strongly to *be subject for conscience sake**, are loosened from off their minds, which may some time or another need every tie, that can keep them attached to us; it will much facilitate their becoming adversaries themselves. And we shall well deserve their revolting from us, if we take no care of their obeying God. But on the contrary, as Christian principles will teach them dutifulness and loyalty; so receiving from hence the support of those principles, will recommend us to their gratitude:

* Rom. xiii. 5.

hoping for the continuance of that support, will create some dependence in point of interest; and agreeing in the same faith and worship with us, will be an everlasting motive to civil unity also.

But another common benefit of propagating Christianity in our colonies is, that thus we shall hinder corruptions of Christianity from prevailing there, and sharing with profaneness a divided empire over the land. If no authorized teachers are sent, some inducement or another will raise voluntary ones from time to time; and very possibly the less reasonable their doctrine is, the more gladly it may be received. For if sentiments of religion, are not duly cultivated; as they quite wear out of some minds, so in others they degenerate into superstition or enthusiasm. And accordingly many pernicious errors, besides the above-mentioned capital one of popery, took early root in these provinces; nor are they yet extirpated, perhaps in part newly revived; some, dissolving the obligations of moral duties; some, destroying the inward peace of very pious and good persons, and making life gloomy and uncomfortable: some, leading men to ascribe every folly or wickedness, that possesses the fancy, to divine inspiration: some, inconsistent with our present happy establishment: and others, destructive of the safety of all governments whatever, by forbidding to contribute any kind of assistance to the public defence against enemies; on which notion the representatives of the province of Pennsylvania have acted this last summer *. Now let it only be considered, how fatal a

* See a printed collection of messages, answers, addresses, &c. the substance of which is as follows. The Quakers, *having applied themselves with great industry to obtain an uncommon majority in the assembly*, though *they are not above one-third of the people in number*,

more general belief of some of these doctrines must have been there at present; indeed how very unhappy the belief of any of them must be at all times; and the importance of supporting instructors in true religion, were it only for a standing guard against the worldly inconveniences of false religion, will evidently appear to be very great.

But let us now think, what good must follow from extending this instruction to the poor negroes also. The servitude and hard labour which they undergo,

refused to make any *provision of necessaries for the troops to be raised in that province*, as being a thing *repugnant to their religious principles*, though his majesty had notified *under his sign manual*, that he expected it from them. Soon after this they adjourned for above five weeks; *though the governor made strong instances to the contrary*, setting forth, *that as the new levies were in want of every thing, even houses to cover their heads, he was hourly apprehensive of their committing some disorders.* And being called together again by him in about a fortnight, instead of raising any money, they made a complaint, that many of their servants had been enlisted; and demanded the restitution of them. The governor answered, that they might easily have prevented this inconvenience, and might still easily remedy it, by methods which he pointed out to them; that he had done what he could to relieve them, and would continue to do so; but that forcing out of his majesty's troops at once all the servants in them, would be unreasonable and unjust, very detrimental to the service, and very dangerous to the public peace. Yet notwithstanding these representations, and though Mr. Penn, one of their proprietors, many merchants and other inhabitants of Philadelphia, and the council of the province, concurred with the governor, and pressed them earnestly to answer his majesty's expectations, they came at length to this resolution only: *That* 3000*l. of their current money be paid for the king's use; provided that all the servants enlisted in the province*, whom they had computed at 300, and valued at 10*l.* each, *be first returned to their respective masters, free of all charges; and such assurances given, as* three persons, named in the resolution, *should think fitting, that the said servants are returned, and that no servants be enlisted for the future.* These being the conditions on which the money was given, it will not be thought strange, that when the last advices came from thence, no part of it had been paid.

be it as justifiable as it can, surely requires, that we should make them all the amends in our power: and the danger, into which they have brought our colonies more than once, demands the greatest care to compose and soften their vindictive and sullen spirits. Now there can be nothing contrived on purpose, more likely to effect this, than belief of the Gospel: which not only forbids in general, both doing and *recompensing evil* * ; but commands in particular *as many as are servants under the yoke, to count their masters worthy of all honour* †, *and be subject to them with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward; for this is thank-worthy, if a man for conscience towards God endure grief, suffering wrongfully* ‡: *to do service with good will, as to the Lord, and not to men; knowing, that whatever good any man doth, the same he shall receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free* §. The tendency of such doctrine must be, to make their tempers milder, and their lives happier. And no imagination can be suggested to them, of any worldly exemptions or privileges arising from their profession of it. For as human authority hath granted them none; so the Scripture, far from making any alteration in civil rights, expressly directs, that *every man abide in the condition wherein he is called*, with great indifference of mind concerning outward circumstances ‖: and the only rule, which it prescribes for servants of the same religion with their masters, is, *not to despise them because they are brethren; but do them service the rather* ¶. Nor hath experience at all shewn the behaviour of such, in the present case, to be different from what reason would lead us to expect. On the con-

* Rom. xii. 17. † 1 Tim. vi. 1. ‡ 1 Pet. ii. 18, 19.
§ Eph. vi. 7, 8. ‖ 1 Cor. vii. 20—24. ¶ 1 Tim. vi. 2.

trary, in a great rebellion of the negroes at New York, only two of those who had received any instruction, and only one who had been baptized, was so much as suspected of being guilty; and he was afterwards acknowledged to be innocent: but the deepest in the conspiracy were the slaves of those persons, who had opposed the most warmly all endeavours for their conversion. We may therefore depend on it, that success in these endeavours will both be a security, and every way an advantage, to their proprietors. And if it doth procure the poor wretches themselves a little more kind usage, they will then be fitter to receive it: and at present, as much, as can be safely allowed them, is but their due. The Apostle's injunction was made not only for slaves, but for heathen slaves: *Masters, give to your servants that which is just and equal: knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven*: neither is there respect of persons with him* †. And if their becoming Christians will help, as it certainly will, to obtain them such treatment; putting together their condition and their numbers, there are but few things, which, even on that account, common humanity more obliges us to attempt.

Then as to the influence of Christianity on the Indians: it must undoubtedly restrain their mutual barbarities, which it doth not appear what else will, and dispose them to a settled and orderly life. By means of this, they will come to enjoy the benefit of agriculture, and of all the arts that are useful in society: they will of consequence grow happier and more numerous: and as they will become at the same time more harmless too; it would be both an immoral and a false policy, to envy them these advantages. They have yielded up to us a considerable

* Col. vi. 1. † Ephes. vi. 9.

part of their country: and it is but common gratitude, to shew them the way of living comfortably in the rest. We have introduced amongst them both diseases and vices, which have destroyed great numbers of them: surely it is fit, that we should communicate something to them, which will do them good. It may be feared they are hitherto the worse for their knowledge of us: but they will certainly be the better for the knowledge of our religion. And the more they are prejudiced against it by the wickedness of its professors, the more need there is to lay before them in a full light the excellency of its precepts; and to convince them, that there are persons, who not only believe, but practise them. Nor should it be forgotten, that every single Indian, whom we make a Christian, we make a friend and ally at the same time; both against the remaining heathen, and a much more dangerous neighbour, from whose instigations almost all that we have suffered by them is allowed to have come.

But the temporal advantages of propagating Christianity are infinitely the least. If we allow but the truth of natural religion, we must admit the future, as well as present, happiness of mankind to depend on preserving and diffusing the knowledge of that religion. And there is neither instance nor prospect of either of these things being attempted by any other method, than that of preaching the Gospel: of which the doctrines and duties of nature make so large a part. If therefore it be of importance, that the people in our colonies should worship the Maker of heaven and earth, and believe virtue to be his law; that the negroes and Indians should *be turned from idols, to serve the living and true God**; and that all

* 1 Thess. i. 9.

should know, there will be a recompense hereafter to the just and to the unjust: whoever deserves the name of deist in a good sense, as it stands opposed to atheist, whoever is indeed an enemy to superstition, and a friend to mankind, will rejoice to have that faith carefully taught them, by which alone they will learn these momentous truths; to have it *told among the heathen, that the Lord is king, and that he shall judge the people righteously* *.

But if *the Gospel of Christ*, besides comprehending the system of natural religion, be, by virtue of its own peculiar doctrines, *the power of God unto salvation* †: then every possible motive concurs for being zealous in spreading it throughout the earth. Revelation indeed neither obliges nor permits us to pass a hard sentence on those, who have never had it proposed with sufficient evidence. *To their own master they stand or fall* ‡: and of them only, *to whom much is given, shall much be required* §. *For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not* ‖. But still, as *all men have sinned, and come short of the glory of God* ¶, and there is but one *name under heaven whereby they can be saved* **; as Christianity is inexpressibly more efficacious for the reformation of mankind, than unassisted reason; as our only assurance, either of receiving a future reward, or escaping future punishment, must arise from Scripture; and we have no intimation in it, of any person's enjoying that *life and immortality, which Jesus Christ hath brought to light* ††, but such as believe in him: these considerations, without limiting at all the free mercies of God, cannot but shew us the great supe-

* Psal. xcvi. 10. † Rom. i. 16. ‡ Rom. xiv. 4. § Luke xii. 48. ‖ 2 Cor. viii. 12. ¶ Rom. iii. 23. ** Acts. iv. 12. †† 2 Tim. i. 10.

riority of our own condition, and make us ask, with great solicitude, concerning others: *How then shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear, without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent* *? Our blessed Lord hath intrusted his followers, to preserve his Gospel in purity, where it is; and communicate it, where it is not. By their faithful discharge of these duties formerly, we ourselves were *delivered from the bondage of* heathenism *into the glorious liberty of the children of God* †. It now belongs to us, in our turn, to *strengthen our brethren* ‡, and *call them that are afar off* §: and where shall we find more proper objects of our care and zeal?

Perhaps it may be said, they ought to maintain their own teachers. But this cannot be expected from the heathen, who are insensible of their want of them: nor from those of our own people, who are too like heathen, and have not the sense of which they ought. Such as have, do maintain their teachers, where they are able. For there are very indigent parts, as well as very opulent. Some whole provinces have no assistance at all from us. And in most, if not all places, we are only joint contributors. As soon as ever there is room for it, they will be left to build by themselves on the foundation laid: and the society will go on to new work. Inquiries are constantly made, what each congregation can do: and missionaries have been withdrawn, till they will do it. For we are not only desirous, but under a necessity, of being as frugal as possible, by the daily increase of petitions for help.

But some will object farther, that all the assistance

* Rom. x. 14, 15.
† Rom. viii. 21.
‡ Luke xxii. 22.
§ Acts. ii. 39.

we can give Christianity, is too much wanted in our own country, to admit of any schemes for propagating it in foreign ones. And would to God these persons would ask themselves, whether they indeed wish to remove the objection, which they make; or only argue against this or that way of encouraging religion, to save the expence of doing it in any way. A true and judicious friend will carefully avoid raising an opposition between two charities: which is a much surer method of hurting the one, than serving the other: whereas, with this precaution, a first scarce ever suffers considerably, if at all, by setting up a second; but men's hearts are enlarged to contribute to both. Every single member of the *Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge* at home, was originally incorporated into ours for spreading it abroad. That society is at this day promoting the same knowledge in the east, as well as here; whilst we are doing it in the west. Many of us belong to both: and promise ourselves a larger share of the blessing of God in each, for neglecting neither. In these nations great provision is made already, and greater we hope will daily be made, for offering salvation to mankind. They who will reject it after all, must do so, and take the consequences. But let us, *in nothing terrified by our adversaries, strive together for the faith of the Gospel**: and not only sustain a defensive war, but shew, that attacking the dominions of our Lord and Master shall increase our zeal to extend them. Our colonies receive from hence a great deal of what is bad. We send them our manufactures: we send them our immoral and irreligious customs; we send them our infidel and profligate books. Surely we ought to do some good, where we do so much harm.

* Phil. i. 27, 28.

And consider, to whom is it done? To our countrymen, and fellow-subjects: distant indeed from us in situation, but closely connected by the strongest ties. To them, to their servants and neighbours it is, that we are imparting happiness: and possibly securing it to ourselves, or our posterity, there, if God should permit us at home to suffer what we deserve.

Now this unquestionably right design cannot be carried on, but under the direction of a regular society. For without it, small benefactions could not be applied at all: and large ones must be applied separately, to great disadvantage: no uniform influence could be preserved, no settled information had; nor any of that experience gained, which results from long and extensive acquaintance with the state of things. What sort of persons they are who compose this society, will appear from the printed list. None of them receive any temporal advantage from being members of it. They are all obliged to subscribe a yearly contribution to the good work, which they undertake. A considerable number of the chief of them constantly attend upon it. And they will admit with pleasure every serious Christian, who offers himself, and is qualified to assist in it. Their standing rules are publicly known, allowed to be good, and faithfully observed. They give the world a yearly account of their success, with an abstract of their receipts and disbursements. They deliver yearly the particulars of them to the lord chancellor and two chief justices. And they have proceeded from the beginning to this day with great unanimity in all their affairs.

It hath been pretended indeed, that immoral and negligent men are employed as missionaries. And to say that this hath never once happened, would be

going too far. But that it hath frequently happened, or ever for want of due care, is utterly false. Strict examination is made at first into the characters of all that are offered; strict inquiry into their behaviour afterwards: and exact accounts required from them twice a year, of what duty they do, and what progress they make. The most earnest requests, the most solemn adjurations are sent, that all, who can, would give any useful intelligence relating to them: and great regard is always paid to such intelligence: yet very few complaints are brought in, either from good will or bad. Too many, it must be owned, of desperate fortunes and characters, who are or pretend to be in holy orders, transport themselves into America, and behave there as it may be expected they will. But we have no concern with any, whose names are not seen in the public list of persons receiving salaries from us. And the larger the number is of vicious clergymen, who go thither of their own accord; the more is the need of sending as many worthy ones as possible, to correct their influence.

Were there room indeed for making larger allowances, more persons of great abilities might be had. Were there better opportunities for a learned education abroad, more of the natives of our colonies would be fitted for the work: which they would undertake with many advantages above such as go from hence. And had they bishops there, these persons might be ordained without the inconveniences of a long voyage: vacancies might be supplied in much less time: the primitive and most useful appointment of confirmation might be restored; and an orderly discipline exercised in the churches. Nor would such an establishment encroach at all, either on liberty of conscience, which ought ever to be sacredly preserved; or

on the present civil rights, either of the governors or people in our colonies. Nor would it bring their dependence on Great Britain into any degree of that danger, which some persons profess to apprehend so strongly on this occasion, who would make no manner of scruple about doing other things much more likely to destroy it: who are not terrified in the least, that such numbers there reject the episcopal order entirely: nor perhaps would be greatly alarmed, were ever so many to reject religion itself: though evidently in proportion as either is thrown off, all dependence produced by it ceases of course. To this equally pious and harmless design, two great prelates *, now deceased, gave a thousand pounds each: and a lady, incomparably more eminent for her virtues than her quality †, bequeathed the sum of five hundred pounds last year to the same purpose: which God incline the hearts of all, in whose power it is, to promote as it deserves! But in the mean time, let it not be imagined, that the difficulties, under which we labour, are too heavy to be overcome. Difficulties are arguments for nothing, but more diligence, and more liberality. For if we stop, till we have every thing that might be wished, when shall we go on?

Another objection to the conduct of the society is, that they have sent missionaries to some places, in which there were already Christian assemblies established and supported. But in one sort of these assemblies, there is no Christian ministry, no celebration of the sacraments of the Gospel. In another, infants are denied the sacrament of baptism. And in the least exceptionable, there are several things, in

* Archbishop Tenison, and Sir Jonathan Trelawney, Bishop of Winchester.

† Lady Elizabeth Hastings.

which the consciences of many, we apprehend with great reason, cannot acquiesce; who were not therefore to be left destitute of public worship: especially as our charter was granted, in express terms, for *the maintenance of an orthodox clergy in those parts*. And the members of this church, I am sorry to say it, lying under peculiar burdens in one considerable province *, which other professors of Christianity do not, though equally dissenters from the majority there; they seem of right entitled to some peculiar assistance in return. We have obtruded the service of the Church of England no where: we have settled no clergyman any where, without the inhabitants requesting it, and contributing to it: we have sent no successor upon a vacancy, without their renewing that request. But if the provision, which we have made for the people of our own communion, hath proved instrumental at the same time to bring others over into it; we hope there is very far from being any harm done. Indeed unity of profession amongst ourselves, effected by methods of peace and charity, will greatly recommend our religion to the infidels: who else may be tempted to continue as they are, for want of knowing with whom to join.

We acknowledge it, whoever is taught Christianity by our care, will be taught it as professed in the

* In New England they are rated to the support of what the Independents, who are the greater part of that people, call, though without right, the Established Church. And the goods of many have been seized, or their bodies imprisoned, for non-payment. The Anabaptists, on their petition, were exempted from paying this rate; and the Quakers, without petitioning; but the petition of the members of our church was rejected.

N. B. This grievance hath been redressed, under the administration of Governor Shirley, in the province of Massachusett's Bay: and, I believe, since the year 1752, in the colony of Connecticut also.

church established here by law. There can be no teaching at all, but in some particular form. We think our own the best. Every body thinks it far from the worst. At least our converts will have the Bible put into their hands, to judge for themselves. And which is righter, that heathens and persons of no religion should continue what they are, or become what we would make them? Our society is by much the most considerable one for this purpose. And were it now to be erected, instead of having subsisted so long: not a single step could be taken on any other footing than this; that the smaller part of those, who wished well to it, must be concluded by the greater.

So good a design therefore being so properly executed; the expences, which must attend it, ought to be supplied. *The Lord hath ordained, that they who preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel**. And there is the same reason, the same necessity indeed, that the missionaries in America should have due provision made for them, as that the Apostles should at first, or the ministers of our parishes now. And if persons of character, being at liberty, as they are, to exercise their function elsewhere, are willing to undertake such an employment as this, at such a distance, on so small an allowance as they receive from the Society: they ought surely to have it raised for them very cheerfully, and *be counted worthy of double honour* †, in the sense of recompense as well as esteem, if it could be paid them.

But perhaps it will be said, Supporting designs of this nature is the clergy's business: let them take care of it. And so, God be thanked, we do: and so, I hope in God, we shall, whether we are helped.

* 1 Cor. ix. 14. † 1 Tim. v. 17.

in it more or less; in such manner as both to keep pace with the willing, and make amends for the unwilling. We desire not to boast, and we need not to be ashamed, of the proportion which we contribute. But we may notwithstanding do very well to increase it. For there is so much expected of us, and we are so greatly concerned to answer every reasonable expectation to the utmost; that if any of our order have omitted taking sufficient notice of a charity so immediately related to their profession, it is their duty on many accounts, to make full compensation to it without delay. It is indeed our duty, on every occasion, at all times, but especially in an age when no part of our conduct will be interpreted favourably, to avoid all appearance, either of preferring *riches in this world* before being *rich in good works* *, or of *loving pleasures more than God* †. St. Paul *took wages of* some *churches to do* others *service* ‡. Let us, out of the wages which we take, do all the service we can to the church of God; and *distribute* largely *to the necessities of the saints* §, particularly their spiritual ones.

But is the support of this design incumbent on the clergy alone? Did not the laity originally maintain the Apostles in their travels? And ought they not still to be equally zealous, *that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified* ‖? Do they not know, how very inconsiderable the benefices of far the greatest part of the clergy are; what hospitality is required of the rest of us; and how large demands are continually made upon us for charities of various kinds: to the poor of our parishes and neighbourhoods, of our brethren, their widows and orphans;

* 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18. † 2 Tim. iii. 4. ‡ 2 Cor. xi. 8.
§ Rom. xii. 13. ‖ 2 Thess. iii. 1.

to every pious and compassionate use, public or private? And are they not sensible also, that were we ever so deficient, this excuses not them: that every man's duty is, not to guard against doing more good than comes to his share, but to do willingly what he can; and that each one's reward shall be in proportion to his work?

Whoever therefore finds himself disposed to make objections, let him examine, what is at the bottom of them: whether it be not really disregard to religion, or want of humanity; some groundless prejudice, or some wrong attachment to self-interest or self-gratification. If so, let him first plant the Gospel in his own heart: and all his pleas against contributing to the propagation of it, will soon vanish.

Every man's charities indeed ought to be left to his own choice. But so many, even of those who are bountiful in other ways, neglect pious uses almost entirely, that good persons have both opportunity and reason for allotting to these a large proportion of their beneficence. And amongst these, as that now under consideration is of too extensive a nature to be thoroughly comprehended by every one, and at too great a distance to make any strong impression on the generality of the world; they, who do form just conceptions of it, should, in proportion to the smallness of their number, be the more liberal to it: as in truth there is need. The only certain income we have, is a trifle: not sixty pounds a year *. The voluntary subscriptions, though they are ten times greater, are not a fifth part of the annual expence. Hitherto therefore almost all hath depended on occasional gifts: which, after sinking much lower than they were formerly, for some few years increased

* Now, in 1765, not seventy.

again. On this encouragement, the society, importuned continually for new missionaries, with an earnestness which nothing but necessity could justify resisting, made a great addition to their number. And had the contributions of this last year risen much above the preceding ones, it had been but too easy to have disposed of them all. But on the contrary, though one noble benefaction, of a thousand pounds, hath been given *, to be employed for the conversion of the negroes; yet those to the other parts of our design have fallen very short: and a heavy debt hath been of consequence incurred. This may possibly reduce us to ask assistance, in a method, of which, though authorized, we have seldom made use: being desirous, that *he who sheweth mercy*, might appear to do it *with cheerfulness* †, and not constrained by solicitations. But in whatever manner application is made to persons, we trust the same God, who hath provided for us wonderfully thus long, will now also dispose their hearts to consider, that on them it depends, whether such a design, so far advanced, through so many difficulties, shall be carried on still, and gain ground continually, as it easily may; or whether it shall fall back, and sink into nothing, with very little hope of being ever revived: that he will move wise men to think, what the public interest requires of them; and benevolent persons, to regard the private happiness of their fellow-creatures: true Christians, to support and enlarge the kingdom of their Master with zeal; true protestants, to silence effectually the boasts and reproaches of the Romanists on this head; and all true friends of our religious establishment, to endeavour, that it may gain as honourable a pre-eminence as

* By Mr. Batt, of Hampshire. † Rom. xii. 8.

possible, over the rest of the reformed churches, in so good a work.

Persons in plentiful circumstances, and perhaps at a loss for ways in which they may give alms, will here find one undoubtedly proper way. And persons in arrear to religion and charity, have an excellent opportunity offered them of paying the debt. They who plead the multitude of other expences, might, a very great part of them, by withdrawing but a little of what they ought from their luxury and vanity, qualify themselves for liberalities, which will turn hereafter to a much better account. And such as make the increase of taxes their excuse, ought to consider, that as Providence hath brought that increase upon us, by permitting us to suffer so much from our enemies, in that part of the world, where we have done so little for God; espousing his cause is the likeliest method of deriving a blessing on our own; and if we neglect it, whatever may befall us there, we must impute to ourselves. We enjoy very great advantages from thence: the government, large revenues; the nation in general, a most beneficial trade; every one of us, something or another, useful or agreeable in life. It is therefore our common concern, both to do good where we have received it; and to do it in such manner, as may best secure our continuing to receive it. But they more especially, who are now raising fortunes by commerce with our American settlements, or who possess acquired or hereditary estates, of which that commerce laid the foundation, they should think often, how much hath accrued to them from the produce of these colonies, the country of these Indians, the labour of these negroes; and reflect very seriously, what returns, possibly justice, at least gratitude,

and in many cases prudence also, as well as piety, direct them to make.

Some perhaps may approve one part of this undertaking beyond the rest: and whatever they give, will be applied, if they desire it, to that alone. Some may be unwilling to let their benefactions appear: and such may with ease transmit them privately: the donation will be acknowledged, the donor unknown. But though charity given in secret, from a principle of humility, be laudable in the highest degree; yet when the motive is fear of ridicule or censure from a profane age, this argues a weakness of mind, very dangerous to those who are influenced by it, and very prejudicial to religion: which cannot have a more seasonable service done it, than if persons of rank and influence, all persons indeed, who inwardly wish well to it, would openly patronize the several designs formed to promote it.

The design now before us, both deserves and requires a general co-operation, to produce its complete effect: that they who are able, should contribute to it, in proportion to their ability; and they who are not, speak well of it, and pray for it: that we of the society should be vigilant and active, prudent and impartial in our administration: that persons in authority abroad should countenance and protect the work; for in their power it is, to forward or obstruct it very greatly: that the people in general there, should not only be willing to let all under them and around them *partake of the grace of life**, but earnestly invite them to it, *with meekness of wisdom*, and by the most prevalent of arguments, *a good conversation* †. But beyond the rest it is necessary for every one concerned in the immediate

* 1 Pet. iii. 7. † James iii. 13.

execution of the design, always to remember, that bad as it is in other teachers of the Gospel to behave in a manner unworthy of their profession, it will be yet worse in them, if they take an uncommon character upon themselves, only to dishonour it; and *compass sea and land* *, with no other effect, than to make *God's name be blasphemed amongst the Gentiles* †: that they ought with peculiar diligence to *follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace* ‡, *holding fast the faithful word, as they have been taught, that they may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convince gainsayers* §; that they ought to *be instant, in season, out of season; to watch, endure afflictions, and make full proof of their ministry* ‖, *shewing themselves in all things patterns of good works* ¶.

These then are our several duties; and great will be our reward for performing them. Let us therefore, each in his station, *arise and be doing: and the Lord be with us* **.

* Matth. xxiii. 15. † Rom. ii. 24. ‡ 2 Tim. ii. 22.
§ Tit. i. 9. ‖ 2 Tim. iv. 2. 5. ¶ Tit. ii. 7.
** 1 Chron. xxii. 16.

SERMON VII.

PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF CHRIST-CHURCH, LONDON, ON THURSDAY, MAY 5, 1743, BEING THE TIME OF THE YEARLY MEETING OF THE CHILDREN EDUCATED IN THE CHARITY SCHOOLS, IN AND ABOUT THE CITIES OF LONDON AND WESTMINSTER.

ROMANS XIV. 16.

Let not then your good be evil spoken of.

AMONGST many excellencies, which unite to recommend our holy religion, there are few that shew its benevolent spirit in a stronger light, than its requiring us, not only to abstain from every thing sinful ourselves, but carefully to avoid giving any occasion of sin to others *. If the most innocent action, that we do, will be thought a wrong one by any of our brethren; we are strictly bound, either to omit it †, if we can without considerable inconvenience; or at least to guard and explain it, as well as the nature of the case will permit: that so we may neither tempt him to censure us uncharitably, nor to imitate us against his conscience. The former of these is the danger, which the words of the text most naturally express: and to keep clear of it, is a matter of great importance.

Attention to obviate censures may often prevent

* Rom. xiv. † 1 Cor. viii.

us from acting, as well as others from judging, amiss. And where we act ever so rightly, yet if we are suspected of erring, though in circumstances only, and seem negligent of that suspicion; it may grieve good persons, and perhaps weaken their union with us; it may entirely separate from us the inconsiderate and wavering; it may give a handle to the bad for great triumph and misrepresentation; and both incline them to grow still worse, and enable them to do still more harm. Whereas prudent care, first not to deserve reproach, and then not to lie under it, may procure us regard from mankind, by shewing regard to them; may secure the well-disposed on our side, and furnish them with the means of defending us; may convince even the prejudiced of some of their mistakes, and moderate their vehemence in the rest. At least, we shall thus exercise a true Christian temper, improve ourselves, and be exemplary to others.

But though we are concerned to vindicate all our actions from injurious charges, yet our virtuous actions especially. When things merely lawful are condemned, the damage may be small: but if worthy deeds are vilified, religion suffers deeply. And therefore, as we are now assembled to patronize a design, which we apprehend to be a very valuable one, but which some have opposed and decried, the erecting of schools for the children of the poor, I shall endeavour to shew,

I. That this is a *good* work.

II. What are the right methods, to prevent its *being evil spoken of.*

III. What course we are to take, if that cannot be prevented entirely.

Little remains to be said indeed upon any of these points, which hath not been said often already. But

if persons will repeat objections, the answers must be repeated too. And the plainest truths, as they cannot influence at all, if they are forgotten, ought to influence us the more, not the less, for being frequently inculcated.

I. *First* then it must be shewn, that this method of giving the children of the poor a Christian education, is a *good* work.

Now if we believe Christianity true, we must believe it is the way to eternal happiness. And were we to doubt of its truth, we must notwithstanding see it is the way to present happiness. For it confessedly teaches in the clearest manner, and enforces by the strongest motives, every thing conducive to private and public welfare: and nothing else doth so. Natural religion, as distinct from Christianity, whatever zeal may be pretended for it, neither hath been, nor is likely to be, seriously propagated: nor is it capable of carrying in it the direction, the encouragement, or the terror, that revelation doth. Virtue, without religion, will perpetually be modelled by people's fancies, and overturned by their passions and interests, for want of the hopes and fears of futurity to counterbalance them. And human laws, the only restraint besides, extend but to a small part of our behaviour; and without principle, they will be faultily contrived, and remissly or partially executed: men will elude them in some cases, break through them at all adventures in others; and having once learnt to despise death, as they well may if nothing follows it, will have little fear of what the magistrate can inflict. All ages and nations have found these things true: they are visibly so in our own, to an uncommon degree: and experience joins with reason to acknowledge, that Scripture points out the

only remedy: *All thy children shall be taught of God, and great shall be the peace of thy children* *.

If then the belief of Christianity be thus necessary, instruction in it ought to be early. The absolute ignorance in which we are born, and the propensity we manifest immediately, to receive impressions from what we see and hear, are an evident proof of our Maker's design, that we should be formed by education into what we are to be. And had this never been neglected, error and wickedness had never prevailed. Now indeed, since they have, instruction will in most places, more or less, lead children into what is wrong. But still it is the surest method we can take, to preserve them from it. Were their friends to teach them nothing, would their own passions, and the companions they would choose, be better tutors? Their reason indeed possibly might: and very possibly might not. At least it would come too late, and be minded too little, to be trusted alone. Where young persons are taught from the first ever so well, and governed ever so prudently, it doth not always succeed. But such care must afford vastly greater hope, than if they are left to themselves without any, till bad notions and customs have taken root, till their appetites have grown vehement, and their tempers stubborn; till they laugh at advice, and disdain authority. If then we would prevent all the misery such wretches may suffer, all the mischief they may do, all the burthens they may bring on society; if we would make them useful to the world, and happy in themselves; the plain rule is, *Train* them *up* when *children in the way they should go; and* probably *when they are old, they will not depart from it* †.

But by whom shall this be done, in the case of the

* Isa. liv. 13. † Prov. xxii. 6.

poor? Unquestionably it is the duty of their parents. But many of them are orphans. Many have parents, who teach, or allow them to be taught, all manner of evil: and most of them have such as want leisure, or capacity, or diligence, to teach them the good, which they ought; and at the same time are unable or unwilling to pay others for teaching them. Great numbers of them indeed are removed early into families of better rank. But how very little prospect there is in general, that more care will be taken of them there, than their nearest relations took at home, I need not say. Will then the public instruction of the church suffice? But, alas! what multitudes of them are there, that seldom or never go thither? The laws that require it, are not executed: their parents have not used them to it: their masters are indifferent about it, or perhaps make it difficult to them: and what wonder, if in these circumstances the poor creatures neglect it? Besides, there is some degree of previous knowledge requisite to their attending public worship to good effect. And the minister, were they always duly sent to him, cannot alone ground them sufficiently in the first elements of that knowledge; nor in larger parishes make any considerable advance towards it.

What further provision might be made in this important affair, either by enacting new laws, or enforcing the old ones, is not a point to be considered here: but only, what can be attempted by private zeal and prudence; the laws and the execution of them continuing such as they are, and probably will be.

Now as to persons in higher circumstances: they must and will be left to themselves, to educate their youth just as they please; and they, and we, must

take the consequences. But the poor are many of them desirous to have theirs educated rightly. And most of them may be induced to it by those additional encouragements, of clothing and fitting them for business, which are singly very excellent charities, and, joined with religious instruction, make a very complete one. Surely there can be no doubt then, whether a method so beneficial every way, to the children, the parents, the public, should be joyfully embraced. The wisest and best of ancient legislators, and philosophers, have all prescribed a strict education of youth, as the foundation of every thing good. Both the Jewish and Christian institutions absolutely enjoin it. In Protestant countries abroad, teachers are universally provided for the children of the poor: who are in most places bound by law to become their scholars *. Our governors at home both in Church and State, with the whole body of serious persons of all denominations, have shewn their approbation of this design. The only person, who hath attempted publicly to prove it hurtful, hath attempted, in the same book, to prove *vice a public benefit* †. I know but one author more of the least note, who hath declared against these schools: and he fairly acknowledges, that, "under a proper regulation, something like them may be commendable ‡," though he was led, by unhappy prejudices and false reports, to inveigh with great bitterness against the conduct of them.

II. Let us therefore inquire, in the *second* place, what are the true methods to prevent this *good* work from *being evil spoken of*.

* See the Dean of Peterborough's sermon at the meeting of these children, 1740, p. 23.

† Fable of the Bees. ‡ Cato's Letters, No. 133.

Now these in general must be, giving no occasion for just objections; and, returning sufficient answers to unjust ones. Undoubtedly the former is the main thing. For wrong conduct neither can nor ought to be defended; and right conduct will in a great measure defend itself: yet not so entirely, but that a seasonable vindication may be necessary for the best cause. I shall therefore endeavour to set forth jointly, what ought to be done; and, where any accusation worth notice hath been brought, what is done, so far as I have been able to learn, in the choice, the management, and the disposal of these children.

1. The liberty of *choosing* fit objects for this charity is a great advantage, which hospitals for foundlings have not; and should be used with great uprightness and discretion. If we admit those, whose parents or other near friends are able and likely to give them a proper education; we divert the bounty, which we undertake to direct, from such as need it: and there is but too much ground to apprehend, that some who have no need may request our assistance. If we send in children to be maintained at a common charge, whom we should else have brought up at our own: this is burthening the school to ease ourselves; and possibly, receiving more from it, than we contribute to it. And if we allow the recommendations of powerful friends, or the entreaties of dependants, to engage us in undue preferences: it is purchasing favour from the one, or the false reputation of good-nature from the other, at the expence of our character as faithful stewards.

The next consideration, after the necessities of the children, should be their fitness: both of mind, to take in the instruction, which they are to have; and of body, to go through the business, for which they

are designed; otherwise the pains and money, spent upon them, may be quite thrown away.

Where these things are equal, or nearly so; the offspring of industrious and good persons, ordinarily speaking, should be sure of admission before others: both as the prospect of success with them is much fairer, and as their parents may justly expect the comfort of having this distinction shewn them by the professed patrons of religion and virtue; which will also partake of the encouragement and countenance that they receive. Yet if the fund, intrusted with us, can be extended further, to the families of negligent, or even grossly wicked creatures: as they certainly want instruction more, so we ought not to despair of their improving by it. If they can be kept, for any considerable time, separate from their wretched friends; though the cost will be greater, yet the advantage is so visible, both in speculation and in fact *, that very much good might be expected from this method, were it more practised. But even if they cannot be separated, yet what they learn at school will be some antidote against what they see at home: besides that bad parents will often assist the endeavours, that are used to keep their children from becoming like them; and now and then have been shamed and reformed by them, instead of corrupting them. This kind provision may indeed make some parents only the more idle and extravagant: and so may that of parochial relief, or of hospitals for the sick. But for the most part, they who are thus worthless, would be equally so, if all these benefactions were abolished. The same sort of persons neglected their children, before charity-schools

* Particularly in the girls' school, belonging to the parish of St. James, Westminster.

were known, who do it now. And it is great mercy to the poor young creatures, to enable them to say: *When my father and my mother forsake me, the Lord taketh me up* *.

2. In the *management* of these children, as teaching them religion is the chief thing proposed, so it ought to employ the chief attention: which it may without hindrance, indeed with advantage, to the other part of their education. In order to this end, getting by heart their catechism, and their prayers, and select portions of Scripture, is a step by no means to be omitted or despised. For experience hath taught the need of fixing thus in their memories at first, what their understandings will afterwards ripen gradually to comprehend. But if this one step be mistaken for the whole; they may be brought up in all the form of religion, with scarce any meaning accompanying it. And though very general and confused sentiments of piety and duty may often be of great use, both in directing and restraining persons: yet sometimes it is possible they may do harm; and more distinct ones cannot fail of being, in proportion more safe and beneficial. Their teachers therefore should very carefully explain to them, as soon and as clearly as they can, every thing which they oblige them to repeat; and make proper trials, from time to time, of their apprehending, as well as remembering, what they are taught: in which branch of their work they may be greatly assisted, partly by some of the printed expositions, with which they should always be furnished; and partly by informing themselves, what methods are taken in the neighbouring schools of best repute. Another very advantageous and very pleasing way of increasing their ac-

* Psal. xxvii. 12.

quaintance with religion, would be, turning their attention, as they read the Bible, to the more useful parts of its history, by familiar and short remarks upon them; such as their instructors can make, and they can enter into, without difficulty. Nor would it be at all a hard matter, by the help of almost any one of the small pieces written of late in defence of Christianity, to give them so much insight into the grounds and evidences of it, as will furnish them with much better reasons for believing, than they will ever have for disbelieving it. And as this is, at all times, a piece of justice due to reasonable creatures; so it is, at the present time, peculiarly necessary to a most unhappy degree.

The knowledge, thus instilled, must be constantly applied to the producing of suitable dispositions. And above all, there must be diligently imprinted on their hearts a deep reverence of God, as the Almighty and all-seeing Ruler of the world: who hath given such laws to men, as he knows are necessary for their good; and will make us everlastingly happy or miserable as we obey or transgress them. This is a principle, which will operate from the first, on every capacity, in every case; will make duty appear important, and sin dreadful; will teach them to feel the insufficiency of their natural strength, and to rejoice most heartily in the grace of the Gospel; to be sincere and earnest in their prayers, regular and watchful in their lives, and through the whole of their course mindful of the end *.

Constant attendance on public worship is one inestimable benefit, which this education secures to children. And to render it as useful to them as pos-

* See the Lord Bishop of Sodor and Man's Sermon, preached on the same occasion with this, in the year 1724.

sible, they should be diligently taught, and I doubt not but they are, to approach the house of God with the utmost seriousness, to hearken reverently to his word read and preached, and perform their part of the liturgy in such a manner, as may best engage their own attention; and yet give others no disturbance, by the noise of their responses, or the loudness of their singing: concerning which particulars, express directions have been given by the trustees. The indiscretion of teaching them difficult and unusual tunes is, I hope, nearly corrected every where. But a reasonable degree of skill in the common ones, will be a needful support of the harmony of the congregation, a means of familiarizing good thoughts to their minds, and of making divine service more cheerful and pleasing to them; which they should be engaged by every motive to frequent, as long as they live: else all that they have been taught will soon wear out; and the Lord's day become the most ruinous, instead of the most beneficial, part of their time.

It must be expected, that we should recommend to these children the faith and worship of our own communion, as all other Christians do: and teach them that respect to the church that they are members of, and the ministers who officiate in it, which the Scripture† in very strong terms requires they should have. But all this both may and ought to be done with such temper and prudence, as not in the least to serve the purposes of superstition and uncharitableness, or civil or religious tyranny; but of true piety and virtue alone: which they will never learn from those, of whom they think either ill or meanly. And whatever designs of carrying things further, have been either justly or unjustly suspected, some time ago, in

† Matth. xviii. 17. 1 Thess v. 12, 13. Heb. xiii. 17.

some few cases: yet there doth not appear any ground of suspicion remaining. And as I believe no set of clergy since the world became Christian, were ever so fully and generally convinced, as ours at present, of the wickedness and folly of making attempts upon the liberties of mankind; so every observing person must see, that this danger is far from being an imminent, or an increasing one. Tragical fears, it must be owned, were entertained, or pretended, at first, of the immoderate power, which the institution of these schools would give us. But time and experience have thoroughly shewn, how very little reason there was, on any such account, either for us to be fond of the scheme, or the laity jealous of it. The enemies of religion indeed will of course exclaim against the greatness of our influence, even whilst they despise us for the smallness of it: but all others may surely see cause to wish, that we had much more than we have, for good purposes; and God forbid we should either desire or use any, to promote bad ones.

Next after the duties, that we owe to our Maker, Christianity requires obedience to our earthly governors. And the government with which we are now blessed, is so necessary for the preservation of every thing valuable to us, that all persons of all ranks should be habituated from their earliest years to pray for it, and honour it, and live contentedly and thankfully under it: but those of low rank particularly, *to be quiet, and do their own business* *; *not exercising themselves in matters too high for them* †. And if this rule were either transgressed, or neglected, by the directors or teachers of our charity-schools; it would be an insuperable objection, so long as it con-

* 1 Thess. iv. 11. † Psal. cxxxi. 1.

tinued, against encouraging such of them, as were thus fundamentally mismanaged. But indeed there hath been found, on repeated enquiry, very good reason to be satisfied, that the faults of this kind, which there might be once, never reached far, and have been long ago reformed. The imputation therefore now would be grievously unjust: but there cannot be too strict a caution to avoid all appearance, not only of disloyalty, but of every party regard of every sort, in the whole conduct of this design: for much of its support, and much of its benefit, absolutely depends upon that one thing.

Together with the habits of religion and obedience to lawful authority, these children should be taught every other, that is useful and good. Their moral behaviour, a point of vastly more consequence than their learning, should be diligently watched, both in the school, and as much as possible out of it too; for which purpose they are distinguished by a peculiar dress: and their parents should be earnestly warned, not to undo what their instructors are doing. Ill-humour, idleness, indecency, lying, dishonesty, profaneness, should be severely punished as often as they are observed: and if any of them corrupts the rest, or appears incorrigible himself, he should be immediately dismissed; and no false tenderness, or mean-spirited fear of disobliging, shewn, either by teachers or trustees. For maintaining the credit of a school, is the sure way of providing for the support of it.

But particularly humility should be instilled into them with singular care. They should understand, that the lowest of those, whom their own parents maintain, are for that very reason their superiors: and that no education, given as an alms, can be a

ground for thinking highly of themselves. Their usage in all respects should be answerable to such lessons. Cleanliness should be required of them, as far as ever their employments allow it: but no extraordinary provision should be made for it, nor the least affectation of nicety tolerated in either sex. Their clothes should be no better, if so good, as they may hope to wear all the rest of their lives; no gaiety of colour, no trifling ornaments permitted; nor any distinction between them and other children, in which they can possibly be tempted to take pleasure. If they are fed: their food should be of the coarsest sort, and not more than enough. If they are lodged: it should be in a manner, that is suitable to every thing else. For, besides that frugality is a most important branch of fruitfulness in the management of charities, *it is good that they should bear the yoke in their youth* *; be inured to the treatment they must expect to receive: and wrong-judged indulgence is the greatest cruelty, that can be exercised towards them.

These things, with others to be mentioned in their due places, require much diligence and prudence, but, if possible, yet more piety and seriousness, in their masters and mistresses. If they have the religion and morals of their children at heart; they will find means, with moderate abilities, and few and artless words, to give them a strong tincture of both. But if they are lukewarm, and indifferent about the matter; they will take little pains, and be little minded; and nothing will be learnt, beyond a few forms. Therefore in the choice of them, not their poverty, not the recommendation of others, not our own desire of serving them, should determine us: but

* Lam. iii. 27.

merely their fitness in these principal points; for the want of which, no qualifications else, either natural or acquired, can ever compensate. Nor is choosing them discreetly by any means sufficient, without superintending them continually afterwards; to examine what progress is made under them; to excite or restrain, to praise or reprove, to support or dismiss them, as their behaviour shall give cause.

The ministers of their several parishes, I believe, do not fail, as occasion offers, to countenance and assist them, in the religious part of their work especially. And would they bestow pretty frequently some kind advice upon them and their scholars; the good consequences of it might reach further, than at the first view may appear. For if being taught their duty makes these children visibly better; other persons, it may be hoped, will teach theirs also; but if it doth not, a hasty conclusion will immediately be drawn by too many, that religion doth harm, or at least no good.

One great help, both to the understanding and practising of religion, is, being able to read. The will of God is contained in his written word: and why have we it in our mother-tongue, but that all may be acquainted with it? We are often reminded, that persons ought to judge for themselves: this is qualifying them for it. By the means of pious books, which that excellent *Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge*, amongst other good works, have provided for the poor at very cheap rates, they who can read, may have at all times plain and familiar instructions and warnings, concerning each part of their duty, which they can review at every leisure hour, dwell upon frequently, and fix in their hearts. Many of them

cannot attend on public service near so often as they would: reading will make them some amends for this. Many grow insensibly negligent and thoughtless: reading will awaken them, *and strengthen the things that remain, and are ready to die**. They may indeed learn wickedness from books: but they may also learn full as much of it without them, by the discourse which they hear every day. And as good books will be put into the hands of these children first, and teach them to abhor bad ones, and enable them to spend their time agreeably and profitably alone, and bring them of consequence neither to need, nor love dangerous company: there can be no doubt in their case, on which side the benefit lies. But, besides religious advantages, being able to read is of very great use in all common business: and scarce any body hath servants who are unable, but on one occasion or another he finds considerable inconveniences from it: which is likewise the case of writing and accounts. If indeed the poorer sorts were to be carried on so far in the two last accomplishments, as to give them an expectation of living by their pen; it would neither be charity nor prudence, but only distressing their betters: amongst whom there are multitudes of persons thus qualified, ready at all times for employment. But some low degree of skill in this way is already too common, either to make them grow vain, or others murmur at them: and the more it approaches towards being universal, the smaller will be the danger, and the greater the benefit. In country villages indeed writing may be less needful: and possibly may turn the minds of the children, or of their parents for them, to some other business than husbandry. And therefore in such

* Rev. iii. 2.

places, it may perhaps be as well omitted; and I believe commonly is. But reading must be serviceable in all places. For however useless or hurtful to persons in low life the higher kind of improvements may be; which is a point most absurdly laboured in speaking against charity-schools, where no such things are taught: yet enabling the meanest people to carry on their business more commodiously, and know their duty more thoroughly, (the almost only uses they will ever find for their learning, if religiously educated) must surely have a tendency to make them better, not worse. Ignorance and stupidity, for which some, though unwilling to own it, have pleaded strenuously on this occasion *, who on others accuse the clergy as the great promoters of them, are neither virtues, nor friends to virtue. On the contrary, most of those are abundantly *wise to do evil, who to do good have no knowledge* †.

But still, as work is what all these children are destined for, it should be constantly had in view: and they should enter upon it whilst they are at school, if possible. It will make them useful at present, and both able and willing to work afterwards. It will put vain and idle fancies out of their heads; and shew all the world, what is really aimed at. It will silence the principal objection of enemies, and remove the only scruple of many true friends. Accordingly, for some years past, it hath been strongly insisted on by almost every preacher upon the subject; warmly recommended by the worthy society before mentioned, who were the first authors of this whole design: and is, I doubt not, as earnestly de-

* See an Essay on Charity and Charity Schools, page 340. 353. 370.

† Jer. iv. 22.

sired by the trustees, as it can be by the public; whose expectations are perfectly reasonable, excepting that they are a little too impatient.

Many right and excellent undertakings are surrounded with vastly more difficulties in the execution, than immediately shew themselves. Trustees of leisure and activity to attempt such a change, and of skill and interest enough to conduct it with success, cannot be had in an instant for every school. Masters and mistresses, very valuable in other respects, may be unqualified in this, or too fully employed already to undertake more: adding supernumerary ones would be chargeable; and substituting better upon the whole, may at present be impracticable. Doubts also may arise, on very just grounds, what work to try. Children are not fit for all sorts: manufactures proper for them are not ready at hand every where: and setting up such on purpose, as would require any considerable number of them, might be an expence and a risk very imprudent, on so uncertain a fund as charity. Besides, where manufactures, which might be suitable to them, are established, the workmen concerned in them can usually supply them very fully with their own children: and heavy complaints would be made, and many contributions withdrawn, if others interfered to take the bread out of their mouths. It is said indeed, that hands are wanting: but the truth is, employments are wanting in most places, for these very young creatures. Their parents can make no profit of them: else they certainly would, instead of sending them to school. The parish workhouses can few of them find any work for the children brought up in them, that turns to account. And most unhappily, several of these difficulties are the

greatest in this city: where yet the number of those, who want such a provision, is and must be the largest.

However, till further employment can be had for them, they are much better employed at school, than they would be else. How are other poor children, whether maintained by their parents or the public rates, spending their time? Visibly, the most part of them, neither in doing nor learning any one thing that is good; but as much of the contrary, as ever they will and can: whilst these are kept, all of them in a considerable degree, and such as are lodged at their schools, entirely, from bad company and bad habits; from which their parents have not leisure to keep them, if they had always inclination: they are accustomed to application and confinement, to orderliness and obedience; which will greatly prepare them for keeping close to work hereafter: they are bred up in the precepts of honest industry: they have it upon their minds from the first, that they are to get their living that way, and no other; and they are at last all put out to it.

Surely these considerations must have the effect, on all thinking persons, of restraining their censures, though by no means their wishes. For it is both to be wished most ardently, and endeavoured most heartily, that every obstacle to so excellent an improvement, as that of introducing work, may as soon as possible be every where overcome. This is not a thing, which you, who are the managers of these charities, are driven into; and excusing yourselves from it, as long as you can. You very well know, how important a duty industry is. You neither have, nor can have, any inducement to discourage it in this case; but all the reason in the world to the

contrary: and such, as absurdly clamour against you, would give a much better and very welcome proof of their zeal, if they would assist you, and share the difficulties of the attempt with you. But, without waiting for what is so little to be expected, there are some schools, where the children do work: why may not their methods and regulations be inquired into, and imitated by others? All the new erected schools in Ireland join labour with instruction: probably something might be learnt from them. Persons of experience in various kinds of business in this great city, could surely, some of them, suggest what at least would deserve trial. For the girls especially one should think employment might be found; and for most of them, I believe, is: complete employment, where they live together; and where they do not, a good deal; in making, for instance, their own and others' coarse cloaths. For as to fine work of any sort, it would be raising them above the rank, for which they are intended; and might therefore be a worse and more lasting mischief, than setting them to none. What either sex can do, perhaps, will seldom turn to much profit: but merely doing any thing that tends to usefulness, will be so great an advantage to them of itself, that some danger, nay some certainty of loss by it at first, may very well be borne for the sake of it. Or to prevent this, if any person would hire, or even accept of their service, for one part of the day or week; the remainder of it might be very sufficient for their other instruction. Or whenever their parents could keep them well employed, provided assurance was given that they did so, that might be allowed: especially in the country; where, according to the different seasons of the year, there are very busy and

very leisure times: and their friends will be much the readier to send them to the latter, for being sure of their assistance at the former. Their learning, it must be acknowledged, will go on the more slowly for it, and their teachers will have more trouble with them: but, sooner or later, they will be taught as much as they need. And accordingly I see with great pleasure, that the printed rules of the trustees have expressly provided, indeed for every thing right and proper in the management of their trust, that can well be thought of, but particularly for leave to be given in this case. And were there exact accounts procured from every part of the nation, what rules are observed in the several schools, with the reasons of them: I am persuaded it would be a means of vindicating them in most things, as well as directing them better in some. I shall only add further under this head, that where labour is not made part of their business, it will be advisable, to take the children young and to keep them no longer, than till they have acquired some competent degree of knowledge and good principles. For so they will have all that they can have: work as soon as possible, and other instruction in the meanwhile.

3. The manner of *disposing* of them, when they come to be dismissed, is the next point. And as all education is for the sake of what shall follow it, the trustees for them should interest themselves not a little in their future course of life; and, so far as they can, secure their parents' consent when they are admitted, to their being placed out properly.

The profane or vicious, if any such be allowed to take them, will esteem them the less, not the more, for a considerable part of what they have learnt; and do nothing to preserve the impressions of it,

perhaps a great deal to efface them; and then will throw the whole blame of their ill behaviour on the management, under which they have been; and charge it with every thing, that their own imaginations can suggest. Good persons therefore should always be sought out for them to go to. And they should be earnestly entreated, to keep them in the way into which they have been put: especially to see, that they constantly attend on the Lord's day's service, and make a proper use of their religious books. For some such should always be given them at their leaving the school, with a solemn charge concerning the main branches of their conduct.

But not only the persons, with whom they are placed, but the employments, in which they are fixed, should be well considered. Great numbers of them have been sent to sea: and it is not the fault of the trustees, but of the parents, that more are not defending or enriching their country on board our ships. Of the rest, those who are bred in this town mostly become either apprentices or household servants: and, it seems, objections are made against each method of disposing of them.

It hath been said, that they are put to retailing shopkeepers, or other easy employments, unsuitable to their original condition; and that more money is required, and given with them, than with other children: all which, I am assured, is absolutely false in fact. They are put, as they undoubtedly ought, to laborious working trades, and no other: with many of them, no money at all is given: with most of them, but forty shillings: with some few, five pounds: but more with none. And indeed it is evident, that the friends of such an education will dispose of them as

cheap as they can; were it for this reason only, that they may take in as many as they can.

Another suggestion is, that they are put out to worthless persons, in bad circumstances, who take the money, and then break. But neither of this do I find any proof. However, though a groundless assertion, it may furnish an useful warning.

But at least, it is objected further, breeding so many of them to trades occasions a scarcity of servants. Now even in this town, not two-thirds of the boys, nor much above one-fourth of the girls, have been put apprentices at all: and a great part of these were probably no other than household servants, taken by indenture for a term of years. What the proportion hath been in the country, doth not appear: but in all likelihood it must have been very small. Or were it otherwise, disproportions of this nature will soon rectify themselves. Where apprentices or journeymen are not wanted, and other servants are, these children will of course be sent where the demand is greatest: nor can the trustees have either inclination or power to prevent it.

But whilst one of the writers against our charity schools accuses them of lessening the number of servants *, the other charges them with increasing it †. Possibly the meaning may be, that they increase the number of the upper and idler sort, and lessen that of the lower and more laborious. Now as to this: the boys, when they come from school, are plainly incapable of the higher services: nor are many of them taken, even for footmen. And yet, what plenty soever there is of livery servants, there is so loud a complaint of the want of sober and honest ones, that I

* Essay, &c. p. 346. † Cato, p. 241.

apprehend it would be no inconvenience, but a general advantage, if more of these children were put into that station, in serious and regular families: for in others they would have little chance of doing good, and a great one of being ruined. Then for the girls: as they certainly ought not either to be raised into the easier places, or qualified for them; since it would hurt both others who have a better claim to them, and the public; so I cannot find that they are: but that low business, with low wages of fifty shillings or three pounds a year at most, is what universally falls to their share, till by a course of diligence and faithfulness they can better their condition; which surely then should not be envied them.

It hath been alleged indeed, that persons are unwilling to take them for servants. But, as I know this to be very false in some places; so I hope, where it is true, it cannot be often on account of their education. Some may want servants of more strength, than these young people can have at first: some may dislike taking so unexperienced ones; some may think it beneath them, to have such mean creatures in their houses: and some may be unjustly prejudiced against them in other respects, partly by false representations, and partly also by mistaken appearances. For there is a superficial pertness, very apt to spring up, at that time of life, amongst numbers bred together: which ought to be, and I hope is, carefully kept under; and yet may now and then give a little offence. Besides, all who are taught any thing valuable, are doubtless in some danger of esteeming themselves rather too highly upon it. But this can never be a reason, why they should be taught nothing valuable. And such trifling faults are so easily conquered in children, and will be so

amply recompensed by substantial good qualities, that prudent persons will certainly think them worth trying at least. They will find them taught to their hands those good principles, which else they must think it their own duty to teach them, with no small pains. And they will find them restrained, as much as they could be, from the vices, of which they would wish them not to be guilty, and in which others of their rank are too commonly indulged. Still not all, it must be owned, prove well, either under this sort of management, or any other. Such as do, be they ever so many, have little or nothing said of them: it is only what ought to be expected. Such as do not, occasion abundance of talk: and all the errors, into which they run in spite of their education, are pretended to flow from it. But so far as enquiry hath hitherto been made, multitudes have proved excellently good; few in proportion remarkably bad; scarce any, perhaps none, have been convicted of capital crimes, excepting those who had been expelled as incurable. And if more particular enquiries were carried on in every school, as they are in some, concerning the behaviour of each child, that hath been put out either to service or apprenticeship: where they behave ill, it might give a good insight into the cause, and shew how to remove it; but I am persuaded, from what I have experienced, it would be generally found, that they behave well. To which perhaps it might add no despicable incitement, if some little reward were given to every one, who at the end of so many years had deserved a good character. And I am told, there is a legacy left to one school, appropriated to this purpose.

But the chief objection with many persons is, that this method of education takes off great numbers

from husbandry. And it must be allowed, that most of those, who are bred up by charity in or near these two cities, are fixed in or near them afterwards. But is there the least likelihood, that any of them would else have gone to country business? Do any of the other children of the poor go to it from hence? Did any of them before these schools were erected? None at all. The governors of one * school have for some years advertised, that they were desirous of sending their children to husbandry on very reasonable terms: and had they met with encouragement, which they have not, others would have followed their example. The clergy have frequently in their sermons exhorted to this way of disposing of them. The more than once mentioned society have advised it continually for a long time. And could any person suggest the means to so good an end, the trustees have given public assurance, that they would rejoice in it most sincerely. In the meanwhile, they do all that they have the power of doing: they place them in such employments, as they must have followed otherwise, if they followed any. For indeed many of them would only have been brought up to beg or steal: few would have been employed so soon; scarce any so well. As to the children in country schools, their number is so small, considering the extent through which they are dispersed, that no general inconvenience could as yet be sensibly perceived from it, even though a great part of them were put out improperly. But I apprehend they are not. They are none of them removed hither: nor apter than others, so far as I can hear, to come of their own accord. Where manufactures flourish, they are as useful in them, as they could be in any thing else: where

* That of St. Andrew's, Holborn.

there are none, or decaying ones only, they will go to husbandry of course.

It is said indeed, that hands are greatly wanted for country work. And at particular seasons they are: but whether so very much upon the whole, as some think, may for several reasons be doubted. The wages of country servants have certainly been much raised: but so have all wages: perhaps nearly in the same proportion. And as the quantity of our wealth, real or nominal, hath increased considerably within the last half century; the prices of the things, for which we exchange it, and of labour amongst other things, must have increased by degrees, even had labourers of each kind been as numerous as ever: whereas probably they are much diminished. But then the diminution proceeds, not from these schools, but from other causes of a very different nature *. Vast multitudes of men have been employed and lost in our armies and fleets. These two great cities are increased beyond measure, and exhaust the rest of the nation. The number of unnecessary and useless servants is multiplied excessively: who corrupt one another here, and their poor neighbours when they go into the country, and teach them a fondness for the pleasures and ease of the town. Hither therefore they flock; set up for such places and such wages as they like, and behave as they think fit: support themselves by combinations, when out of place, as

* The author of the Essay, &c. seems to be sensible of this, when he says, p. 351, that "if a thousand faults were to concur, before "the inconveniences we labour under could be produced, yet no "man can doubt, but charity schools are accessary, or at least "more likely to increase than redress our complaints." This indeed is saying a great deal too much. But as others have said much more, there is no question but he would also; unless he had felt that he could not, consistently with truth or modesty.

long as they can; and at last will take any courses, rather than wise ones. But indeed luxury and dissoluteness are spread with irreligion through our people in general, from the highest to the lowest; they must all both appear and fare better than their predecessors in the same stations: they live, too many of them, in wicked and expensive lewdness, instead of honest matrimony; by this vice, and the dreadfully pernicious one, commonly joined with it, of drinking spirituous liquors, they enfeeble and destroy themselves early, and produce no increase. These are the real causes of the complaint: and do they owe their rise to charity schools? So far from it, that in truth there is double occasion for such schools, in town and country both, to preserve, if it may be, some part of our poor from this dreadful plague, that rages so fatally amongst them.

But it is objected, in the last place; if this method of education hath so excellent a tendency, how comes it to pass, that instead of that mighty reformation amongst the common people, which the earlier sermons on this occasion promised from it, they are thus confessedly grown worse under the use of it, than they were before? Now the answer is very easy. No provision of any sort for the benefit of mankind ever did, or probably ever will, come up to the expectations and hopes, which good persons, laudably zealous for it, were willing to entertain. Yet this doth not prove all such provisions to be useless or wrong. Besides, it could not well be either foreseen or suspected, forty years ago, how entirely magistrates and heads of families would neglect the religion and morals of all under their care, and with what enthusiastic vehemence others would set themselves to extirpate seriousness and order out of the world. No

wonder, if such remissness and such licentiousness have done more harm, than charity schools have done good. The number educated in them, is a very small part of the poor of the nation: and the wickedness of the rest corrupts too many of these. Still the right principles, taught them, often preserve them, and often bring them back, when nothing else would. And if this too frequently proves otherwise, it only shews the proneness of our nature to sin, and the necessity of our best care. Had none been taken, bad as we are, we had been much worse; and had more been taken, we might have been much better. But to charge the degeneracy of a people on the very thing, that doth so much to prevent it; and make it the reason of their being wicked, that some of them are trained up to be pious and virtuous; is a degree of absurdity, which one scarce knows how to excuse from wilful misrepresentation.

III. I now proceed, as I am very sensible it is high time, to consider briefly, in the *third* place, what course we are to take, if neither prudent management, nor rational defences of the *good* work that we are engaged in, can altogether prevent its *being evil spoken of:* which, though very hard, hath been hitherto, and we must expect will be, the case.

Some will speak ill of it from hatred, others from indifference, to religion and virtue. For though in reason both unbelievers and immoral persons ought to wish, that most others, especially the poor, might be sober and honest, and for that purpose religious; and therefore ought to encourage those of them who are so, and such methods as would make the rest of them so: yet Scripture * hath taught us to look for the contrary from them, and in experience we find

* Amos v. 10. John xv. 19. xvii. 14. 1 John iii. 12.

it. They would even seem to act from a kind of principle in this matter: and persons, who have no fear in the least of society being hurt by profaneness and profligateness, affect prodigious fears of its being hurt by charity schools: do nothing, say nothing, against other evils; join in them, plead for them; but this one danger awakens all their public spirit: and they are as clear, that the education of these poor children is the cause of almost every thing they dislike, as the heathen Romans were, that all the calamities which befel their empire, proceeded from the growth of Christianity. Some again, without going so great lengths, will not fail however to condemn what they must else contribute to support. Others are so unhappily attentive to party considerations or personal prejudices, that if a design, ever so valuable, comes from a wrong quarter, instead of being ambitious to share in the merit and the honour of it, they set themselves immediately to depreciate it, and suggest mischievous intentions in it. And every one of these motives will induce some to invent and many more to magnify faults: to dress out facts with circumstances, that entirely alter the nature of them; and talk vehemently about things, which have been corrected long ago, as if they happened lately, and the same ill management subsisted still. No persons indeed should be charged with speaking or acting from worse motives, than they do: for it is both injuring and exasperating them. But every person ought conscientiously to examine, what his own motives are; and prudently to consider, what those of others may be; and neither be influenced by their opinions, nor their assertions, more than they deserve. For not only false, but incredible and ridi-

culous stories about these schools, have been confidently averred, and incautiously believed.

Nor are bad people only, but very good ones sometimes, grievously inclined to partialities and hard censures: too negligent of enquiring, too hasty in giving credit. A small, or but imagined failure, in the scheme, in the execution, in the success, of a most useful undertaking, shall cool their friendship, or provoke their enmity to it: and they strangely forget, that a few errors and defects are no reason for abandoning valuable designs, but only for amending them; and that the good arising from them, even if amendments cannot be procured, may be vastly greater than the harm. It is very afflicting, when persons, who mean well to religion, will notwithstanding take part thus with such as mean ill to it; and abet those, who have no other view than to destroy, instead of favouring, the endeavours that are used to reform and improve. The watchfulness of our worthy diocesan over the management of this charity, hath kept equal pace with the malice of its forwardest adversaries *. And your care, who are trustees, hath been applied without intermission to prevent or remedy, what others have only busied themselves to rail at. Yet the faithful diligence shewn on the one side, hath been suspected and reproached: and the unrighteous accusations brought on the other, applauded and propagated.

But, unjust as this treatment is, you must resolve to bear it with all possible temper and composedness. For persons, who judge and behave very wrong in

* See the directions given by the Lord Bishop of London to the masters and mistresses of charity schools, in the chapter-house of St. Paul's, November 14, 1724.

relation to these schools, may yet be entitled to great regard on other accounts. And where prejudice and a kind of fashion run against any thing, as they do amongst too many in the present case; angry complaints, however well grounded, will only be despised, or excite a return of more anger: whereas mild representations will at least mollify those, whom they cannot bring over. Objections therefore, and even invectives, should be patiently heard: and answers, though sufficiently given already, repeated with calmness. If real faults are found, they should be acknowledged: if proper alterations are demanded, they should be made. For though innovations, which appear very plausible, may be found, when examined, very dangerous; and therefore love of change is by no means to be encouraged; yet aversion to it may be carried to an extreme also; and persons may both intend very well, and in most things do very well, and yet material points may have been either overlooked by them at first, or gradually forgotten afterwards. Each of you singly therefore should always be solicitous to learn, both from friends and enemies, what will be conducive to your design: and that excellent rule, which you have so wisely established and so long observed, of stated meetings to consult together for the better conduct of it, should be strictly kept up; and diligently applied, to propose modestly, and promote unanimously, whatever may contribute either to perfect or recommend it. Only you will remember, that the former should be your chief concern: and that the reality, not the name, of a Christian and useful education, is the thing, which you are to have at heart.

Such then is your duty: and if you are conscious

of having taken due pains to perform it, let who will censure or ridicule you, let who will grow cool or leave you, go on with cheerfulness, and persevere to the end. For, provided it be *a zeal according to knowledge* *, *it is good to be always zealously affected in a good thing* †, and not to suffer our *love to wax cold, because iniquity abounds* ‡. Deserting such a work, after once engaging in it, not only withdraws countenance from it, but casts an imputation upon it. *Be not* therefore *overcome of evil, but,* in this sense as well as others, *overcome evil with good* §. You have the comfort of doing much service to God and your fellow-creatures: you have the consciousness of having endeavoured to do more. You deserve from all persons, and you will receive from all considerate persons, great honour: and were it less, you would only be the surer, that you act from a right principle, and shall obtain a large reward; not only for all you have designed, but all you have borne, as you ought; whether it be reproach, or whether it be disappointment. But then let your whole lives be suitable to this part: be good Christians in every respect yourselves, whilst you profess to make others such: else you will discredit your undertaking before men, and lose your recompense from God. For though *charity shall cover the multitude of sins* ‖: yet this one work is only a small branch of that extensive virtue; and were it the whole, no wilful transgressions, of which you do not so repent, as to forsake them, shall ever be hid by it.

But all, that the directors of this charity can do, will be much in vain, unless you, the masters and

* Rom. x. 2. † Gal. iv. 18. ‡ Matt. xxiv. 12.
§ Rom. xii. 21. ‖ 1 Peter iv. 8.

mistresses of the several schools, perform your share as you ought, in every particular, which you can either suggest to yourselves, or learn from others: unless you go through your whole work with diligence and discretion, with patience and vigilance, with impartiality and disinterestedness; with deference and respect to those who employ you, with authority and yet mildness towards those, over whom you are placed; with a tender concern for their temporal and eternal happiness, and a fearless resolution to oppose and overcome every hindrance to either. The best designs, without a suitable execution of them, are likely to end in nothing, or worse. Think then with yourselves: will you occasion all this charity, and all these objects of it, to be utterly lost by your fault? Or will you be the authors of more good to them, and more blessedness to your own souls, than any persons of your degree possibly can in any other way? By your endeavours and your prayers you have the latter in your power: and God incline your hearts to it! The impressions, that can be made from this place at present on your poor children, can be but small, or at best short-lived. To you therefore I leave it, to give them the deepest sense that you are able, of the unspeakable privilege of their education, the dreadful guilt of making a bad use of it, the indispensable duty of doing justice and credit every way to the schools, to which they belong: and of recompensing hereafter, as God shall enable them, the benefit which they receive.

But I must not even yet conclude, till I have in one word more reminded you all, who are here assembled, that without continual help this excellent undertaking cannot be supported; and that almost

every one is capable of giving it help, more or less, in some way or another. They who have the burthen of conducting it as trustees, all afford it the assistance of their purses, as well as their pains and advice. And I hope such of you, as are proper, will be ready, when occasion shall require, to share in the same trust. For nothing is more absolutely necessary to such a charity, than a constant succession of wise, and good, and reputable managers. But if you cannot serve it this way, serve it however in the much easier way, of a cheerful liberality. Its being a *good* thing *evil spoken of*, obliges you, who are convinced it is unjustly so spoken of, both to patronize it more earnestly, and contribute to it more bountifully. The truest objects of compassion upon earth, are young persons left, uninstructed and unrestrained, to the dangers of a corrupted nature and a vicious world. And such, without the timely interposition of a Christian spirit, would these have been, whose appearance now not only gives your eyes the pleasure of a beautiful and affecting spectacle, but your hearts the joy of beholding at once, so many thousands of young candidates for usefulness in this world, and endless felicity in the next, as perhaps no nation under the sun besides hath ever seen together. Let us comfort ourselves in the prospect, and oppose it to the very gloomy ones, that we have around us. Amongst the poor our religion had its rise: and there at least it may yet maintain its ground, till it *shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward* *, amongst other ranks of men. We are following the original plan of the divine wisdom, in making provision for revealing *those things to babes*, which *the*

* Isai. xxxvii. 31.

wise and prudent in their own eyes have *hid from* themselves *. And may God, *out of the mouth of* these *babes and sucklings* †, *ordain and perfect praise* to his holy name, and *strength* to the kingdom of his ever-blessed Son!

* Matt. xi. 25. † Psalm viii. 2. Matt. xxi. 16.

SERMON VIII.

PREACHED IN THE PARISH-CHURCH OF ST. JAMES, WESTMINSTER, MARCH 11, 1749-50, ON OCCASION OF THE EARTHQUAKE, MARCH 8.

PSALM ii. 11.

Serve the Lord with fear: and rejoice unto Him with reverence.

THE passion of fear is an extremely necessary one for all creatures, whose good or evil depends on their behaviour: for it prompts them instantly to avoid whatever would harm them: and accordingly God hath given it a strong and deep root in human nature. But as our frame is disordered throughout, we are liable, in this respect, as well as many more, now to exceed, now to be deficient: and fearing too little, on some occasions, is the cause of our fearing, on others, much more, than else we should need. Religion, if we permit it, will regulate all our inward feelings to our present and eternal advantage: and is particularly serviceable, not only in exciting, but directing, and moderating this. Without religion, there may be endless alarms. Were not the world governed by infinite justice and goodness; every person, that would, might, in multitudes of cases, do any hurt to others with impunity: and all mischief of all kinds befall us, however innocent, singly or

jointly, through the whole course of life, unalleviated by a prospect of recompense after death. Nay indeed, as nothing hinders, but that, if it were possible for us to exist without God here, it might be possible hereafter too: there could be no certainty, that death itself would end our sufferings, or even would not increase them. But the knowledge of a gracious and wise Providence entirely secures us, if we believe it as we ought, not only against all imaginations of inexorable fate and blind chance, but all real detriment from the worst efforts of men or devils. For *if God be for us, who can be against us* ?* It is very true, religion banishes these objects of apprehension by substituting in their room another, unspeakably more formidable than them all. *I say unto you, my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body; and after that, have no more, that they can do. But I will forewarn you, whom you shall fear. Fear him, which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell: yea, I say unto you, fear him* †. And did not reason afford us hope; and Scripture, assurance, of his accepting and rewarding us, on most equitable terms: our condition under the divine government would be surrounded with incomparably greater terrors, than any other possibly could. But since we know the means of obtaining his favour, in this life and the next: if we will but use them conscientiously, the awe, which we cannot but feel, of an almighty arm, will be sweetly mixed with faithful trust and thankful love: and those things, which give others the most grievous disturbance, will not need to give us the least. *Fear ye not their fear, neither be afraid: but sanctify the Lord of Hosts, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread: and he shall be a sanctuary* ‡. First

* Rom. viii. 31. † Luke xii. 4, 5. ‡ Isa. viii. 12, 13, 14.

therefore learn to *serve the Lord with fear:* and then you will be entitled to *rejoice unto him with reverence.*

The word of God, far from encouraging groundless and superstitious horrors, cautions against them strongly. In all ages and nations, men have been terrified with eclipses of the sun and moon: in many, with conjunctions, oppositions and aspects of the stars, and other celestial appearances: things altogether harmless. Therefore such frights the prophet expressly condemns. *Thus saith the Lord: Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven, because the heathen are dismayed at them: for the customs of the people are vain* *. But whatsoever things are real instruments of our Maker's will, we are to consider as such; and respect all that is wrought by them, as proceeding from his appointment. Were we sure of living ever so long on earth; we are absolutely in his hands all the time we live; and ought to be deeply sensible, that our happiness or misery, even here, depends continually upon him. But he hath passed a sentence of death on us all, to be executed, at furthest in a few years: and this furnishes a new motive to seriousness of heart, which we should be recollecting daily and hourly. But instead of that, we contrive all possible means never to think of it; and we succeed too well. Therefore to awaken us from this lethargy, he hath ordained besides, that the whole of life shall be full of diseases and accidents, to cut it short on a sudden, often when there was least cause to expect them: and here is a more pressing call to *consider our latter end* †. But however surprising each of these may be, when it happens very near us; yet, as one or another of them happens pretty frequently; for that very reason,

* Jer. x. 2, 3. † Deut. xxxii. 29.

though they ought to affect us the more, they scarce affect us at all. Therefore he also brings on, from time to time, the less common, and more widely destructive events, of wars and pestilences. Of the former we have for several years, not long past, had heavy experience. And what we see and hear to this day of the latter amongst our cattle, tells us, one should think, in a very interesting manner, to what we are subject ourselves. But if all these things fail of the good effects, which he purposes by them, as it is notorious they do with us most lamentably: he hath in reserve more alarming methods of admonition still: one in particular, by which he shakes whole cities, whole countries and nations, sometimes to the extent of many hundred leagues at once, notwithstanding the intervention of large and deep seas; and hath frequently taken away the lives of thousands in a moment, by a ruin, which no wisdom can foresee, no caution prevent, no strength withstand, no art evade.

You have often read and heard of such threatenings and devastations elsewhere: but did not look on them, as having the least relation to yourselves. Possibly some of you imagined, that this part of the world was exempt from them. But indeed your ancestors have felt them, many times recorded in history, probably many more. However, that, you might think, was long ago; and would be long enough, before it happened again. Yet not a few persons, now alive, remember one earthquake in this city: and that you may not dream of being safer than they, Providence hath taken care, that you shall feel another. Still, when you had escaped one shock, perhaps you thought the danger was over. There-

fore you have felt a stronger. And which of you can be sure, that this will prove the last?

But you will say, Neither these nor the former have done any harm: and therefore why should we fear it from future ones? But let me tell you, earthquakes have done harm in this kingdom, in this town: overturned many private houses, many churches, not without the loss of many lives. But if that were otherwise, have we any reason to doubt, but the causes of earthquakes are the same here, as in other places? Why then may not the effects be the same in our days, though formerly they have been less? Who can look into the bowels of the earth and assign a reason? Place the cause, if you will, contrary, I think to plain evidence, not in the earth, but the air, what will you gain by it? Would not a very little more force, nay a few moments' longer continuance of the same force, that shook our houses the other morning, have buried many or most of us under them, whencesoever it came? And if it had, let us ask ourselves, were we in due readiness to have appeared before God?

No longer than fifty-seven years ago, when the last earthquake before these was felt here; within a few months of the same time, near 2000 persons were destroyed in a moment by one at Jamaica; and near 100,000 by another in Sicily. Not three years and a half ago, in Lima, the principal city of Peru, containing 60,000 inhabitants, 5000 perished by an earthquake in less than three minutes, and but twenty-five houses were left standing. At the seaport of Callao, belonging to it, not one building, not one ship escaped, and only 100 inhabitants out of 7000: nor were there fewer, than sixty shocks more,

in thirty days. Indeed at the same place, they return generally about once a month, and with great violence once in a few years. Ought the consideration of these things to have no effect upon us? Allowing them not to prove, that we ever shall be in so dreadful a situation: yet they prove, that, for aught we know, we may: they shew, in a strong light, the terrors of divine power; and should remind us of all the other reasons, that we have, to stand in awe of it, both in this world, and a future one: of which we ought to think without such warnings; but if we can be thoughtless in the midst of them, we are void of all excuse. By taking pains for it, we may bring ourselves to imagine the sufferings of others, no concern of ours: and our own danger, a very slight one. But do we resolve then, that nothing shall move us, but what will destroy us? That we will not repent, unless we are attacked by a judgment, that will leave multitudes of us no time to repent? You have, in the Revelation of St. John, this prophetic description: *And the same hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell; and in the earthquake were slain of men, seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven* *. Had it not been much better, that all should have been preserved, by giving glory to God in time? And who can be certain, in such a case, that he may not be one amongst those who perish, however few?

But suppose we could be assured, that this land of ours would for ever be exempted from the severe visitations, which so many others have long undergone, do still, and are likely to undergo: who hath exempted us? *who hath made us to differ* †? Do we

* Rev. xi. 13. † 1 Cor. iv. 7.

owe him nothing on that account; that *the lot is fallen unto us in so fair a ground*, that *we have so goodly a heritage* * ? And ought such mild admonitions from God, as we have lately received, of what he could do, and doth not, to pass by us unregarded ? Do we *despise the riches of his goodness and forbearance*, instead of *knowing, that it leads us to repentance* † ? The countries, that suffer most, have no right to complain. He hath doubtless wise, though unsearchable reasons, for subjecting them to the calamities, from which he hath preserved others: and he will sufficiently distinguish hereafter the good and the bad, whom at any time he involves in a common calamity here. Yet surely we are glad, every one of us, that we are not in their condition: and whatever we have cause to be glad of, we have cause to be thankful for it, to the Author of all good.

But perhaps you will say: "These things are natural: and therefore what foundation is there for "considering them in a religious light?" But supposing they are, which is more than we know, is not the whole frame of things, of our bodies and our souls, natural? And are we therefore to consider none of them in a religious light? We are to consider them all so. Life and death are natural. Judgment, heaven and hell, are just as natural. For what is nature? The order established by a wise and holy God. And must he not design, that we should learn from every part of it, especially the most striking parts, to honour him, and *fear before the Lord* ‡ ? He foresaw from the beginning, that constant and uniform impressions on our minds would be apt to grow faint and languid. Therefore he interwove, in his original scheme, incidents, that should alarm us, from time

* Psal. xiv. 7. † Rom. ii. 4. ‡ Haggai i. 12.

to time. Is that provision of his a reason, why we should not be alarmed?

Terror alone indeed is of no use. And God forbid, that I should endeavour to raise it in any of you, were nothing better likely to follow. But, generally speaking, it is the first, the strongest motive to reformation. And though dread of future punishments ought to have, that of present often hath, the most powerful influence in exciting sentiments of piety, and thence of virtue; which are both of them practised afterwards from more ingenuous principles. *With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early. For when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness* *. And this particular judgment, of which we have had, in comparison, so gentle an intimation, appears from Scripture to have been peculiarly intended and employed, through successive generations, to give mankind a sense of reverence and duty towards Him, *who removeth the mountains,* and *overturneth them in his anger; who shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble* †. When the law was delivered at mount Sinai, *the whole mountain,* we read, *quaked greatly* ‡. When Corah and his company rebelled against the Lord; *the ground that was under them clave asunder, the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up: they went down alive into the pit; and the earth closed upon them, and they perished from among the congregation* §. In the days of Saul, when the Lord avenged Israel of the Philistines, *there was a trembling in the field; and the earth quaked; it was a trembling of God* ‖. When he delivered David

* Isa. xxvi. 9. † Job ix. 5, 6. ‡ Exod. xix. 18.
§ Numb. xvi. 31, 32, 33. ‖ 1 Sam. xiv. 15.

from the hand of his enemies, *the very foundations of the hills shook and were removed, because he was wroth* *. When his own people provoked him to displeasure, his threatening in Isaiah is: *Thou shalt be visited of the Lord of Hosts with thunder, and with earthquakes, and great noise, with storm and tempest* †. Sometimes indeed expressions, like these, may signify only disorders and commotions in kingdoms and states, such as we experienced not many years ago, and had reason to pray with the Psalmist: *O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased: O turn thyself to us again. Thou hast made the earth to tremble: heal the breaches thereof, for it shaketh* ‡. But there was in Isaiah's age a literal earthquake, so considerable, that we find it served afterwards, both for a date, to mark time §, and, even at the distance of two hundred years, for a proverbial description of terror: *Ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake, in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah* ‖. Again, Jeremiah sets forth the wickedness of the Jewish nation, too like our own, and its consequences, thus: ***My people is foolish, they have not known me: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge. I beheld the mountains, and lo, they trembled; and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and lo, there was no man: the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by his fierce anger*** ¶. Once more, God is introduced in the Prophet Ezekiel, using these words: ***In my jealousy, and the fire of my wrath, have I spoken: surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel: so that the fishes of the sea, the fowls***

* Psa. xviii. 7. † Isa. xxix. 6. ‡ Psa. lx. 1, 2.
§ Amos i. 1. ‖ Zech. xiv. 5. ¶ Jer. iv. 22—26.

of the heaven, the beasts of the field, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence: and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground: thus will I magnify myself in the eyes of many nations; and they shall know, that I am the Lord *.

Nor doth the Old Testament only give us these awful ideas; but in the New, no less than three of the four evangelists record our Saviour to have foretold, that, before his coming to judgment, *nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven: all these are the beginning of sorrows* †. Now most of these, it must be owned, we have seen and felt. Yet I am far from concluding, and would counsel others not to be rash in concluding, any thing in relation to *the times and seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power* ‡. But we are authorized to conclude, that such visitations may be tokens of wonderful changes, in the natural, in the civil world; as indeed the book of Revelation affords ground to believe, that sooner or later, they will: describing many grand periods of time, as introduced by these forerunners. Or however that be, we cannot err in concluding, that a *God* so *great in counsel and mighty in work,* must have *his eyes open on all the ways of the sons of men, to give every one according to the fruit of his doings* §. Whether at the present time, whether in the present life, appears not yet. And I would not terrify the worst sinner among you, beyond reason. Possibly we may feel no more of these shocks. Possibly no

* Ezek. xxxviii. 19, 20. 23. † Matt. xxiv. 7, 8. Mark xiii. 8. Luke xxi. 11. ‡ Acts i. 7. § Jer. xxxii. 19.

damage may attend them, if we do. But is possibility, is probability, in a matter so totally out of sight, firm ground enough for you to risk your souls upon? Even were it certainty, hath God no other means, than earthquakes, to deal with men as they deserve? Or is not every part of the creation ready to execute his vengeance, whenever he bids it? Surely then you should have immediate recourse to the Scripture remedy, the only infallible one, against this and all dangers, *stand in awe, and sin not* *.

But perhaps you will object: "We are not convinced that our danger, be there ever so much, proceeds from sin. We are not greater sinners, than others: they that suffer most by sudden strokes, are not greater: our Saviour hath told us, that they are not †." But he said it of some only, not of all: and to what end did he say it of those? To make men thoughtless and careless about themselves? No: entirely to make them charitable in their judgments about their brethren. On what foundation then do we of this nation, this city, say, we are not worse than others? I am sensible, the countries around us are very wicked. And it might be as fruitless, as it would be a melancholy employment, to examine, which are worse, we or they. Yet surely our luxury and extravagance, our debauchery and intemperance, our madness for pleasure from the highest to the lowest, our selfishness and profligate corruption, our uncharitable divisions, alas! our many other sins that might be named, are not easily paralleled any where else. But supposing them to equal us in this horrid competition: do they sin as openly, as avowedly as we, *glorying in their shame* ‡? Are they unpunished, unrestrained, I had almost said indulged, as here?

* Psalm iv. 4. † Luke xiii. 2, &c. ‡ Phil. iii. 19.

I conceive, not. Or if they were as boldly and securely vicious in common life: are they as regardless too of Him that made them? I believe no one nation in the Christian world is, or ever was. Many individuals may: but is the generality, the bulk of high and low, so profane any where: so contemptuously negligent of God, and in consequence of that, so utterly destitute of all prospect and all principle of amendment? Or admitting even this: yet in many other nations, ill-grounded, superstitious, unworthy opinions, make up a considerable part of their religious belief: on which account, it is more excusable, if some are tempted to despise the whole; while others rely on empty forms, or impious observances, even to appease God on such occasions, as the present. But you have a rational and moral religion, with plain instructions in it, and home exhortations to live suitably to it, pressed upon you continually: and you *love darkness rather than light, because your deeds are evil**. Nay, more than a few, not content to disobey it, ridicule it, inveigh against it, teach others to do so too: some in mere wanton gaiety; others, with a zeal quite enthusiastic. And for what end? Have they a system of doctrines and precepts to set up, more honourable to the Supreme Being, more beneficial to human society, better fitted to enlighten the understanding, to dignify the heart? And is it to establish this, that they depreciate Christianity? No: however highly and extravagantly they some of them, now and then, affect to talk of natural religion: yet in fact, none of them, so far as appears, either practise or statedly profess it: but they live *without God, and* die without *hope* †. Nor have we only our means of knowledge, but our

* John iv. 19. † Eph. ii. 12.

liberty, our plenty, our numberless mercies of every kind, to aggravate our transgressions. And still can we plead, that we are no worse than others? Or if we could, what comfort is there in that, if we are bad enough to deserve God's indignation; and growing yearly and daily to deserve a higher degree of it: abounding more and more in our old vices, and adding new and unnatural ones to them? Doth our Saviour say, that such, as can flatter themselves, they are not greater sinners than others, need not be afraid? Quite the contrary: he saith, *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish* *. And, I beg you observe, the general terror of that saying hath now been particularly pointed towards this city, the headquarters and example of wickedness to the whole island. This very place hath been the centre, both of the first and the second shock: and they have extended but few miles round it. Doth not that look very like an especial denunciation against us? And should it not incline us to take the prophet's direction? *The voice of the Lord crieth unto the city: and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it* †.

Some, I am told, have resolved to fly away from hence upon it: and then imagine, they shall be out of all hazard. But do you hope to fly from God? Fly from your iniquities to God, if you would be safe. Other precautions will avail you little. You had one alarm a month ago. Have you left off a sin or a folly since; done a deed of charity, or made a hearty prayer the more for it? The public appearance of things, I am sure, hath been almost in all respects the same: and in very many, such as it ought by no means to be. You have now had a second and more

* Luke xiii. 3. † Mic. vi. 9.

terrifying admonition. Hath even that brought you to any determinate good resolutions? If not what do you think will? And what must become of you, if nothing do? Mistake me not to mean, that this one fright should have more effect upon you singly, than all the standing motives to reformation put together. But still, when it hath peculiarly awakened you, and revived the impressions of them all on your minds: if you suffer them to wear out again, and relapse into your former inconsiderateness; you will be too likely to sleep on, till your final ruin overtakes you. This warning was designed for a signal mercy to you. If you slight it; what can you expect, but to be left for the future to the hardness of your own hearts? Even should more of the same kind follow, it is most likely, that you will grow accustomed to them; and like thousands of poor wretches abroad, pursue your sins fearlessly, with all the elements, in their turn, threatening from time to time immediate perdition to you.

But, it may be, more than a few of you have felt no small convictions for some days past: only you dare not express them, either in words or behaviour, becaue the rest of the world would despise you. Yet perhaps, all the while, many of them are under just the same difficulty. You are afraid of their contempt; they are afraid of yours; and would you, on both sides, discover your sentiments, you would support one another in what is right, instead of awing one another into what is wrong. But were you to stand single: are you to stifle and belie your fear of God, for fear of man? Remember what our Lord and Master hath declared to those, who *are ashamed of him and his words, in a sinful and adulterous generation* *.

* Mark viii. 38.

Very probably, in the days of Noah, in those before the overthrow of Sodom, there were persons, disturbed not a little within, at the lives they led, and the threatenings they heard. But still, they knew not how to do otherwise than all around them did. So they went on with the crowd: *they eat, they drank, they planted, they builded, they bought, they sold, they married, they were given in marriage: and knew not, till the flood came, and took them away;* till *it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all**.

But you will say, "Are we then, at such times as "these, to lay aside the common business and offices "of life?" On no account. Lay them aside always on this day, as much as you can. But on others, it is not following them, it is not attending to them diligently, the far greatest part of your time; but attending to them so, as to neglect or break through higher obligations, that is the sin. The proper employments of each person's station are duties, to which God hath called him. But they are to be done from an inward principle of submission to his will, with a just sense of the vanity of this world, of the importance of the next; and with a serious care, *so to pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal* †.

"But if business be allowable, are not diversions "too?" With what intent do you ask this? Is it not indeed, that you may exclaim against your teachers, it may be your religion also, as unreasonably rigid, if we answer one way; and pretend, that we approve of your going on just as you do, if we answer the other way? Come with a better meaning, and ask; and you shall

* Matth. xxiv. 38, 39. Luke xvii. 27, 28, 29.

† Collect 4th Sunday after Trinity.

have satisfaction. But you may have it now. We dare not take upon us to say, that all amusements are unlawful, to all persons, at all times. We believe they are often innocent, sometimes useful and requisite. But we must say; and would to God the people of this land would hear us, for they have great need; that living to them, and doting on them, in the manner now commonly practised, is a heinous, crying, pernicious sin. Fortunes are impaired and ruined; creditors postponed and defrauded: healths worn out, and lives thrown away; children taught nothing that they ought, and initiated early into every thing that they ought not; family, private, public affairs, disregarded; modesty undermined, and common honesty put to trials, which often get the better of it: and all by the means of such a mad pursuit of pleasure and entertainment, of every kind, real or imaginary, through almost every waking hour, as was formerly unknown here; but hath been of late years continually increasing: and is, if there be possible room for it, increasing still; and spreading wider, amongst all ranks of people, in defiance to religion, to reason, to law: even they who make the laws, they who should execute them, they who should see that their inferiors execute them, joining openly in the violation of them, and so inviting all around them to do the same.

But could all these mischiefs be avoided in such a course of life: yet is it nothing, that your time, your thoughts, your souls, are filled with trifles and follies; that you are engaged in them too late over-night, to attend here the next morning on the worship and instruction, which your Maker hath appointed: that such multitudes, instead of so important a work, spend the former part of this holy day in needless visitings and airings, idle excursions and parties; and

not a few, the latter part in debauchery or gaming; that you lay aside, it may be feared entirely, the most improving duties of self-inspection and private prayer; forget God, and give yourselves up to the world: that you cling to these vanities, even at the age when they become you the worst, till you drop into eternity, with your heads and your hearts full of nothing else: and yet on the merit of this wise conduct, apprehend yourselves entitled to scorn, instead of honouring those who act on other principles?

If you cannot use diversions, without running into such lengths, indeed without danger of coming in sight of them; you are bound, as you value your salvation, not to use them at all. And though you can use them ever so safely; it will both be pious, prudent and charitable, to abstain from all of them often, and from some of them perhaps altogether; were it only to guard others, to whom they may be less safe; and to shew the world, what it seems to have no remaining notion of, that life may be supported, may be enjoyed, without them. The present season of Lent used to be a testimony of this: but of late all methods have been employed to make it a testimony of the contrary; by crowding into it, and even into the most sacred week of it, as many entertainments, both in private houses and public theatres, as can be contrived. If these things are wrong, why may not you take the present opportunity, when you have had so loud a call to seriousness, for beginning to practise a little more of it, than ordinary; and for that purpose, keep back from some places, to which else you might have gone? Let others guess the reason. If they ask, let them know it. If they deride you; either enter upon the subject, or avoid it, as you see a likelihood, or none,

of doing good: but at least keep to your point; with temper, with charity, yet with resolution.

"But if we act thus, all the world will shun us, "we shall be left alone: what shall we do?" The more valuable part of the world will not shun you: and the loss of some of your company may be very far from doing you harm. It is likely, you will have a good deal more time to yourselves: but can you not find, have you not already, full employment for it? Discreet conduct of your own affairs, kind assistance of others, needful care of your health, proper improvement of your mind in useful knowledge, these things may surely fill up no small part of your day. But there is another work, the most necessary of all, the *one thing needful**, to which perhaps you have not applied, near so much as it requires, near so much as you imagine: I mean, a serious practical attention to your spiritual state. Surely you must be sensible, that the business of a Christian is, not only to abstain from gross wickedness, and observe the forms of piety, but to mortify that *love of the world* and of pleasure, which is inconsistent with *the love of the Father* †; and *set our affections on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God* ‡; to cultivate and exercise equity, mildness, and charity towards all men, and perform from a right principle every duty of every social relation; yet to know, that after all *we are unprofitable servants* §, and must rely, not on our own righteousness, but the mercy of the Gospel. Great numbers amongst you doubtless are, and may long, perhaps always, have been, what common language calls moral, and even religious persons. But are you what an awakened conscience, what the *Scripture of*

* Luke x. 42.
† 1 John ii. 15.
‡ Col. iii. 1, 2.
§ Luke xvii. 10.

*truth**, calls so? Compare that, and the directions, which wise and good men have drawn out of it for your use, with your past actions, words, and thoughts. Examine both well; without frightening yourselves unreasonably, or accusing yourselves unjustly, but without flattering yourselves at all: remembering, that God is merciful, but remembering also, that he is holy. This alone may prove no short task. And if the inquiry end on the whole in your favour, as God grant it may; frequent reflexions, that your Maker is your friend, and heaven your inheritance, will enable you to pass your future days very joyfully, how little soever may be contributed of superficial happiness from any other quarter. But at the best, you will assuredly perceive at the same time, what will give you still further occupation, many things in yourselves to beg forgiveness for, to amend, to watch over. And should you find, as I fear too many of you will, that *your heart* as yet *is not right in the sight of God; that you are* still *in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity* †; here will be work enough for you to do, though every thing unnecessary be left undone; to humble yourselves before him with deep contrition; to lay hold on his offered mercy, with true faith in the merits of his Son; to pray for his grace, and use it; to *cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit* ‡. Never ask, what you shall do with your spare time, till you have gone through these things. And when you have, if the late providential warning hath been, in the least degree, the occasion of your undertaking them, you will bless God to your dying day for the alarm, which it gave you.

* Dan. x. 21. † Acts viii. 21. 23. ‡ 2 Cor. vii. 1.

Amidst the innumerable and inestimable privileges, belonging to those, who have *acquainted themselves with Him, and are at peace* *, one, peculiarly proper to be mentioned now, is, that while they preserve their integrity, they will never have cause to be dismayed or disturbed at whatever happens in this world. Some good persons indeed may be tempted to accuse themselves of an irreligious insensibility, that they have felt no more on the late occasion. But if, on any occasion, they have felt enough to make them fear God and serve him: let them never be grieved at what, in all likelihood, is merely constitutional, if it be not rather a pious serenity. We read, that when *Elijah stood before the Lord,* first *a great and strong wind rent the mountains and brake in pieces the rocks; but the Lord was not in the wind: after the wind was an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: after the earthquake* was *a fire: but the Lord was not in the fire: after the fire was a small still voice,* and in that God spoke to his servant †. If then he hath spoken to us ever so gently, and we have heard him: it should be matter of comfort, not despondency, that he hath found no need of using words of terror to us. But a much commoner case is, that pious minds are struck, on these extraordinary manifestations of divine power, with great sudden horror. So was David: *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee: and I am afraid of thy judgments* ‡. So was Moses at mount Sinai, when he said, *I exceedingly tremble and quake* §. Therefore never do you, of weaker spirits, either think ill of yourselves or wonder, if your feelings are both more painful and more durable, than you wish. Still they are essentially

* Job xxii. 21. † 1 Kings xix. 11, 12.
‡ Psalm cxix. 120. § Heb. xii. 21.

different from those of wicked persons: your dependence on God will enable you to check your apprehensions, in some measure, when at the highest, and in a while to recover your former tranquillity: to say with Job, *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him**: or in the more triumphant language of the Psalmist: *God is our hope and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be moved, and though the hills be carried into the midst of the sea* †. The whole frame of nature, and every thing that comes to pass in it, is friendly to persons in earnest religious, and *works together for their good* ‡. *Life or death, things present or things to come, all things are theirs; and they are Christ's; and Christ is God's* §.

Earthquakes in particular, terrible as they appear, have often been marks of God's favour to his people. There was one at the death, another at the resurrection of our blessed Lord: the two great bulwarks of Christian comfort. At *the day of Pentecost, there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind* ‖, probably somewhat resembling the sound, which you heard so lately. In a short time after, on the first attempt of persecuting the disciples, *when they had prayed, the place was shaken, where they were assembled together: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake the word of God with boldness* ¶. Again, when Paul and Silas were imprisoned, while they *sang praises unto God, suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken, and all the doors opened:* which was immediately followed by the conversion of the jailor and his family; and the deliverance of the Apostle

* Job xiii. 15. † Ps. xlvi. 1, 2. ‡ Rom. viii. 28.
§ 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. ‖ Acts ii. 1, 2. ¶ Acts iv. 31.

and his companion by the magistrates *. Why then should that so greatly affright you, which hath ministered to so many others, cause of thanksgiving?

"It is somewhat extremely awful." So is every thing, that reminds us, with any strength, of God and our latter end. And yet, if we are not reminded of them effectually, we are undone to eternity. It is not near so awful, as what you notwithstanding profess to desire and pray for: the time, when he shall come to *sit on his throne, from whose face earth and heaven shall flee away, and no place be found for them* †. "But we may be swallowed up instantly." You may, this very instant. And so you may die, every moment, a thousand other ways besides. But do you not consider, in whose power it is, whether you shall or not? Cannot God preserve you? And will he not, if it be for your advantage? Hear the Psalmist: *Whoso dwelleth under the defence of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Thou shalt not be afraid of the terror by night, nor the destruction that wasteth at noon-day. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand: but it shall not come nigh thee. With thine eyes shalt thou behold, and see the reward of the ungodly* ‡. But if he thinks it proper you should die now, why is it not best for you? Shall you not escape by it innumerable, unknown temptations, and hazards to your soul; and be safe and happy for ever? Humility bids you pray against sudden death. But resignation bids you receive it very contentedly, if after all God chooses it for you. In the most important sense, no death is sudden, for which you are prepared; and good persons are prepared always.

But perhaps this kind of visitation alarms you, not

* Acts xvi. 25, &c. † Rev. xx. 11. ‡ Ps. xci. 1. 5, 6, 7, 8.

merely as a dangerous one, but as a token that God is angry. And he is so: but with whom? Not with the good. Or if he be, it is only a fatherly displeasure, that we do not become better. And is not any way of shewing that, infinitely kinder, than leaving us unreproved, and letting us grow worse? If then you perceive yourselves to have been falling into sin or negligence; be thankful for so timely a warning, and reform. But if you do not, or if you have rectified your course; for the honour of religion be of good courage. Keep far indeed from levity of heart, speech, and behaviour: especially in relation to a providence, intended to produce very different effects: but still maintain and express a peaceful, a cheerful composure: nor let it once be said, that you were in the greatest fear, who have cause for none; while they were in none, who have cause for the greatest. Yet if you cannot help this, consider it only as a very pardonable weakness in yourselves: and instead of entertaining even a momentary thought of envying them, recollect with tender pity, how swift the hour of that inconceivably more terrible shock is coming upon them, which the words of St. John describe in so awakening a manner. *And I beheld, and lo there was a great earthquake: and the sun became black as sackcloth, and the moon became as blood, and the stars fell unto the earth; and the heaven departed as a scroll, when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were removed out of their place. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich and the mighty, and every bond-man and every free-man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and the rocks, Fall on us; and hide us from the face of Him, that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:*

for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?* If you desire to be able, your only way is, to obey his commands during life, who is to determine your everlasting state after death; observing the Apostle's exhortation, with which I conclude: *See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not, who refused him that spake on earth,* at the delivery of the law; *much more shall not we, if we turn away from him, that speaketh from heaven: whose voice then shook the earth; but he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake, not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made; that those things, which cannot be shaken, may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom, that cannot be moved; let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire†.*

* Rev. vi. 12—17. † Heb. xii. 25—29.

SERMON IX.

PREACHED AT THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. JAMES, WESTMINSTER, DECEMBER 30, 1750, ON RESIGNING THE RECTORY.

2 COR. xiii. 11.

Finally, brethren, farewell——

You have expected for several months what you will immediately understand the choice of these words to import, my resignation of the office of your minister. If any one blames me, or is sorry for it, I intreat him to consider. Above seventeen years and a half have passed over my head in this place. I have spent the flower and vigour of my life in your service: and now I find, and must expect to find, myself growing less fit every day for the duties of so laborious a cure. You would not wish to wear me quite out before my time: I would not wish to be burthensome, without being useful to you: and it is much better, that you should be grieved at my departure, than weary of my stay; that I should leave you, while I can do something, than continue with you, when I can do nothing: and convenient opportunities of removing are not likely, as you must be sensible, to happen frequently. Besides, the care of my diocese requires me to be absent from you near half my time: another person may be able to bestow his upon you almost entirely. In so long a space

I have given offence probably to more persons than I am aware; whether just offence, is not for me to say: my successor will have offended no one. I have undergone some pretty severe trials, with such temper and spirits as I could: but how either would hold out, in my declining age, to undergo more of them, I cannot foresee. And therefore on the whole, I hope it will not be imputed to me as a fault, that I have accepted of the offer, which his majesty's goodness hath been induced to make me. I did not solicit to be brought amongst you; nor have I solicited to quit you. I had a large income in the church, when I came hither: I have not enriched myself by my abode here: I shall not enrich myself by going from hence. Hitherto I trust I have not remarkably consulted my own ease: and hereafter, through God's grace, I shall be diligent, according to my ability, both in preaching and other duties of my profession. But it must not be thought strange, if amongst these, I chiefly devote myself to the private study of the Holy Scripture, and the daily attendance on divine worship, in the station, to which I am retiring. I return you my heartiest thanks for your kind acceptance of my labours, for your indulgence, for your liberality to me. I humbly ask your pardon for my failings and omissions, which I am sensible have been many: though I can truly say, that I have always uprightly endeavoured to promote your good in every thing, spiritual and temporal; and would willingly think I need not add, that I have in no instance attempted to do you injustice. If in any I can properly serve this parish, or any member of it, I shall ever embrace the occasion with pleasure. And for the best proof, that I can give at present, of that disposition, I beg leave to mention a few things

at parting, about your parochial affairs, your future minister, and yourselves, which I conceive may be useful to you; and concerning which I beseech you to bear the same freedom of speech from me, that you have allowed me to use, on other subjects, for so many years past.

I begin with your civil affairs. For both the management of them, and the judgment passed upon it, are points, that may considerably affect, not only your interest, but your consciences too. Conducting them right is matter of conscience, on one hand: and abstaining from unjust accusations or suspicions, and feeling sentiments of just gratitude, is so, on the other. In some of these matters I have had a share, jointly with your other vestrymen: and should by no means do them justice, were I to omit saying, that I have found those of them, who have attended, impartially and disinterestedly studious, as might indeed be expected from their ranks and characters, of promoting your general welfare; of rectifying errors, and framing and executing due regulations. To these therefore in particular I make my grateful acknowledgments for the assistance and support, which they have so constantly and unanimously afforded me, in the most friendly and obliging manner. Nor are they few or small things, which on a fair inquiry, you will find to have been done by them for your advantage, within the last twenty years: and that more have not, is principally owing to this, that their authority extends to a less part of your concerns by far, than I believe you commonly imagine. For instance, it doth not extend to that most important article, the care of your poor: concerning the maintenance and government of whom, however, they have in my time drawn up and recommended rules,

that were the product of much examination and thought; and on more occasions than one, have given and repeated such advice, as in some things hath proved extremely serviceable; and would have been so in more, had it been sooner and better followed.

Besides your vestry, there are several meetings of other persons for parish business, vulgarly called by the same name, because they have been usually held in the same place. And of these also I can assure you, with great truth, that such, as I have been entitled to attend, are carried on with perfect fidelity, and no small vigilance. The affairs transacted in them are, the disposal of the money collected yearly from house to house on the king's letter; the direction of that excellent institution, your School of Charity Girls; and the distribution of the money given at the sacrament: part of which is employed in buying coals and coats and gowns for indigent persons, in the winter season; part in clothing, teaching, and putting apprentices, forty boys of the parish; part in relieving, by the joint approbation of the rector and churchwardens, who meet for that end, such other objects of compassion, as apply to them: and of all the disbursements before-mentioned, as exact an account, as well can be, is kept. Thus far therefore I can answer for it, that you are served faithfully; whatever prudential improvements longer experience and better judgment may be able to make, as they have already made some.

And in officers, whose proceedings have not usually fallen within my immediate knowledge, I have had very little ground to suspect wilful or gross corruption or negligence; and often the utmost reason to be assured of exemplary uprightness and assiduity. Still the burthen of your poor is both a heavy one, as I

fear it is in most old and large parishes: and a growing one, as I fear it is in all, old or new. That it cannot be lessened, I would on no account venture to say. On the contrary I would earnestly exhort, here in public, those of you, who are now, or hereafter shall be overseers, as I have often done your predecessors in private, and I hope not quite in vain, to procure all the information and take all the pains, that your other engagements will permit, for that purpose: to be very tender indeed to the needy, where there is cause: but not to be moved by false good-nature of your own, by groundless importunities of theirs, or unreasonable recommendations of other persons, to bestow on any, especially the undeserving, more than is really necessary. I would further exhort you, with the same intent, to discountenance as much as you possibly can, idleness, intemperance, and debauchery, which are the main causes of indigence; and use your utmost influence, to make the attendance on divine worship and instruction, at the Infirmary, universal, constant and beneficial; to study unanimity and mutual assistance, and *let nothing be done through strife or vain glory* *: to despise little advantages and self-indulgences; which, though they may be but a trifling foundation for complaint, frequently occasion a great deal: and together with doing what good you can, labour to keep *your good* from being *evil spoken of* †; particularly by a readiness to give satisfaction on any article of your conduct, to every fair enquirer, who is concerned to ask it: endeavouring, according to the Apostle's rule, *that no man should blame you in this abundance, which is administered by you* and *providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but in the sight of men* ‡. For thus you will discharge your own con-

* Phil. ii. 3. † Rom. xiv. 16. ‡ 2 Cor. viii. 20, 21.

sciences, and prevent at once needless expence and uncharitable reflexions: you will gain esteem to yourselves, and to the office that you serve: make it both easy, and in some measure necessary, to your successors, to act rightly too; and so perhaps will long reap your share of profit, as well as credit, from what you have done.

But then I must at the same time, with equal earnestness, beg those, who do not serve such offices, to consider with equity the case of such as do. Reflect a little first, how tedious and irksome an employment it is, to go about collecting rates at thousands of doors. Should not you think it very hard, to have this work doubled and trebled upon you, by being needlessly sent away, and obliged to come again several times over? Reflect also, how disagreeable it must be, to distribute this collection weekly, daily, hourly almost, amongst fourteen or fifteen hundred miserable wretches: to hear and see the distresses of them all; to guard against the frauds, bear the noisomeness, undergo the ill-language of too many of them. Would you imagine, that by doing all this, and receiving nothing for it, you had deserved to be spoken of, as the worst of men? But you will say, there are grievous abuses. And it is impossible to answer for every case or every person, through a course of years. But on the whole, I verily believe, there is little or no designed abuse: and of indiscreet management less than is apprehended. But were there as much; consider again: persons of higher rank disdain to undertake so mean an office, as that of overseers. Tradesmen therefore must: who from their education cannot always have the most extended, or the clearest views of things: who have their own business to fill up most of their time; which

must be minded, else they are undone: who come unexperienced into this difficult employment, and do not continue in it long enough to acquire experience sufficient; are backward perhaps, as we most of us are, to take directions from others; are often divided in opinion amongst themselves; and by the time that they can agree what is right, find or think too much of their year gone, to set about the execution of it: who, besides all this, are too commonly driven to do what they would not, by the solicitations of their neighbours, and even of their superiors, on whom they depend; nay, sometimes are traduced and vilified for aiming to be more frugal, than those that went before them. Surely to persons in these circumstances great allowances ought to be made: and that in prudence, as well as equity. Despair of pleasing you will tempt them to be careless what they do: whereas, if you manifest a disposition to be satisfied with them, and thankful to them, so far as you have cause, you will excite them to deserve still better of you; especially, if along with this, they were but more constantly and regularly inspected, assisted, and supported, by the justices of the peace: to whom therefore I beg leave here to recommend this good work, as I have done elsewhere more than once. And I do it at present with the greater hope of success, because I know several of them are desirous of undertaking it; and am persuaded, that nothing but want of concert, and putting the matter in a due method, prevents it.

I have dwelt somewhat longer on the affairs of your poor, because they have produced uneasiness among you, not only against one another, but against your minister: though he hath no more concern in them, than to pay his proportion towards this, as well

as other common burthens; excepting his general duty, of exhorting all under his care to do theirs. And I hope you must see, that this exhortation of mine, which I have often thought of giving you before now, hath no other motive than a most hearty desire, that, to speak in the words immediately after the text, you may *be of one mind*, and *live in peace, and the God of love and peace be with you.* Let me now mention another thing of a more ecclesiastical nature. This building, in which we are, greatly wants both cleaning and beautifying, as is too visible, and repairing also: which the law, that founded the parish, requires to be done by a rate, levied on the inhabitants. Lesser repairs have been made, without a rate, for many years past, out of the incomes arising from pews and burials. But that from the latter is greatly diminished: and both together cannot near do what is now wanted. And yet taking the method, which after all must be taken, and the sooner the better, hath been delayed for fear of clamour. Let me beseech you therefore, to remove these apprehensions of your officers beforehand, as far as you can, by proper assurances that you understand the case rightly: and when the work is undertaken, to contribute your allotted shares with cheerfulness. I would not urge to you such low considerations, as that of not coming behind other parishes in this respect, whom you excel so vastly in wealth and rank. It is much fitter to remind you of the distinguished honour, due by reason, Scripture, and the consent of mankind, to sacred things; and of the duty and wisdom of not furnishing a pretence, either to unbelievers, or papists, for triumphing over Christianity, or Protestantism; as not requiring, or not being able to obtain, from its professors, any degree of that decency in

their churches, which even the middle sort of them would not bear to be wanting in their dwelling-houses. Indeed every thing public, though of a civil nature only, and yet more of a religious, ought far to exceed, in point of dignity, what is for mere private use. And the neglect of that rule both shews, and will increase, a preference of personal interests to those of the community. We read, that many among the children of Israel, both men and women, brought voluntary *offerings unto the Lord*, for the work of the tabernacle *. The early Christians imitated their example, as soon as they durst: and after the superfluous ornaments of following ages were justly disapproved; valuable presents have been made in the reformed church of England, and in this very church, for the greater solemnity and beauty of divine service. Why would it not now be one fitting mark of regard to God, if persons of fortune and condition were to do the same thing? At least, will it not be a lamentable mark of disregard to him, if any murmur to do what the law enjoins them?

But I proceed to speak to you concerning your future minister. When I prepared this part of my discourse, I had not the least guess who it would be; nor have I added or altered one word since: nor am I sure that I know, even now: if I do, he is almost entirely a stranger to me, except by what he hath written, which is excellent. And therefore you must understand me to speak, without any particular reference to the person, but only on a general consideration of the case. The spiritual and eternal good of multitudes of souls will depend not a little on their attention to his instructions: and that will depend very much on the opinion formed of him, and the reception given him, at first. For God's sake there-

* Exod. xxxv. 5, &c.

fore, let none of you set out with prepossessions against him, of any kind. For in all likelihood they will wrong him: and assuredly they will do harm to you. But especially I beg, that whoever professes any respect for me, would shew it by paying a peculiar respect to my successor. In whatsoever he excels me, as I sincerely wish he may in all things, acknowledge it freely, thank God for it, give him the encouragement of knowing it: and never let any one be so absurd as to imagine, that he shall perform either a right or an acceptable part to me, by detracting in the least from his merit. If in any thing he should seem to be inferior: probably a little time and use may change your minds; you may be reconciled to, and perhaps by degrees prefer, what you disliked, when it was new to you. Or if not, remember the Apostle's observation: *Every man hath his proper gift of God: one after this manner, another after that* *. He that is only second in such or such an attainment, may be first in a different one, of equal or greater benefit. And it is very unfair to judge of a man's character or usefulness on the whole, by a single or a few articles. Besides, he will be able to adapt both his discourses and his behaviour to you much better after a time, than is possible while he is unacquainted with you; and to undertake more for your service, after some space for preparation, than just at present: which you may recollect was my own case. Therefore do not expect too much from him, nor be too easy of belief against him, in the beginning. And afterwards both consider and inquire, what is reasonable to expect, and what not, before you find fault.

The bodies and the voices of men, you well know,

* 1 Cor. vii. 7.

are not equally strong: and one may exert himself without danger, to a degree, which another, though seemingly as well qualified by nature, must not attempt. Now *where there is a willing mind, it is accepted* by Heaven, and should be by you, *according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not* *. And though persons be able, yet such things as are not enjoined, and have not been customary, you have no right to demand, or expect from them. Permit me to mention a few of these. The Sunday evenings' lecture on the catechism had its rise but twelve years ago: and there is none then, and scarce any on week-days, in the neighbouring parishes. Sermons occasionally by your minister at the chapels, in the afternoon, are not above five years older than that. The salary for the reading of early and late prayers at this church, was paid at first by voluntary subscriptions: afterwards out of the offertory money: but now for the last twenty years by the rector; and I believe no such thing is done by any rector elsewhere in the nation. The distribution of religious tracts, at his cost, to the parishioners, particularly to those who are instructed for confirmation, is of yet later date. And therefore, if your succeeding minister omits these things, you are not to blame him; if he continues any of them, you are to thank him.

Another point, akin to the last, in which I must entreat you to be reasonable with him, is the expectation of charity from him. I have all along had other considerable preferment, together with this. I have had sums of money several times of late years, and this last a very great one, entrusted to my disposal. The case of my successor may be extremely

* 2 Cor. viii. 12.

different: and both the high and the low among you should allow for the difference. It is become very usual with many of you to recommend, when requested, any poor person whom you know, I am sorry to add, and more than a few, whom you do not know, to the rector for relief; being deceived perhaps by stories of pretended legacies or gifts, put into his hands for that purpose. And then he must either run a risk of disobliging you, by rejecting your recommendations; or be overburthened with the expence, which they bring on him; or at least every hour almost of his time will be broken and filled up, with hearing and examining distresses and characters. This last inconvenience, I assure you, hath grown upon me in such a manner, that I do not know, how I could have continued to go through it. Therefore when poor persons apply to you, remember, you ought to relieve them yourselves, if you are able: and if you are unable, you should consider, that more objects than enough will come of course to the knowledge of your minister, without adding to them thus. We of the clergy should undoubtedly be ready, both to give our own alms plentifully, and to assist others in giving theirs: but still, as even the Apostle pleaded, *it is not reason, that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables**.

Another thing, which I must take the liberty of asking for my successor, is your bounty. I again return you my thanks for that, which you have exercised towards me. But indulge me, at the same time, a few words on the subject. There are indeed legal dues, belonging to the rectory, so considerable, that were they all paid, and nothing more added, pro-

* Acts vi. 2.

bably the income would be greater, than it now is. But they are so far from being all paid, that in the principal article, Easter offerings, though expressly required by the act of parliament, which founded the parish, I believe, two thousand families, out of three, pay nothing. Such as are known to be poor, are never asked. Such as only say they are poor, though that plea would neither be allowed them, nor made by them, in any other case, are never asked again. And such as refuse, without condescending to allege any reason, have not, in my time, been either compelled, or to my knowledge threatened or solicited. Yet surely it may be said without offence, by one who hath now no interest depending, that in such matters, as well as others, conscience binds all men, both to pay what they know is due, and to make a fair enquiry, whether what is demanded be not due. If they, that will do neither, were forced; they would have no cause to complain. But the more your minister loses by his aversion to harsh methods, the more he is entitled to your voluntary kindness. This alone is what makes his income large: and were it larger than it is, as perhaps you think it, permit me to say; he, that doth the work, deserves the wages; out of which no small deductions will be made by calls upon him of various kinds. The utmost, that almost any of you give, bears, I conceive, no very high proportion to several of your annual expences on other persons, and purposes, of less importance, to say no worse. And diminishing your generosity must be, in some measure, to the most disinterested man, not only an undeserved mortification, but a discouragement of his zeal to serve you. On every account therefore obey the Scripture rule, which, take notice, is general: *Let him,*

that is taught in the word, communicate unto him, that teacheth, in all good things *.

But a far more valuable mark of your regard to your minister, and, I dare say, beyond comparison a more agreeable one to him, will be, your attendance on him here. I see no cause to doubt, but you will have every inducement to this, that you ever have had: and you will assuredly have the strongest which you can have; that assembling yourselves for worship and instruction is the ordinance of Christ, from which you may expect such a blessing on your hearts and lives, as you cannot expect without it. And I have taught you all this while, to very little effect, if you have not yet learnt, that *neither is he that planteth, any thing; neither he that watereth; but God, that giveth the increase* †. If you *have men's persons in admiration* ‡, and come only to hear this or that preacher; however you are pleased, however you are moved, no real and lasting good will be at all likely to follow. And if you come to hear the Gospel, *not as the word of men*, but as *the word of God* §; let who will dispense it, you will receive benefit.

This place indeed doth not afford room for all the inhabitants. But the room, which it doth afford, is most equitably allotted to such as made the earliest application for it: and they, who cannot as yet be accommodated here, may without difficulty at the two chapels. No one therefore needs omit divine service: especially, as you have prayers four times every day at the church, twice every day at the chapels, and sermons twice every Lord's day at both. You have also had, for a considerable part of the year, a lecture on the catechism, equivalent to a

* Gal. vi. 6. † 1 Cor. iii. 7. ‡ Jude, ver. 16. § 1 Thess. ii. 13.

sermon, both on the evening of that day, and the morning of another, the latter of which, at least, you will probably continue to have. And surely you may prevail on yourselves, if need be, to alter your usual hour, of eating, or visiting, once or twice a week; in order to come the oftener, and adore your Maker; to hear his word, and give your servants time to do the same thing. Nay, why may not many of you so regulate your affairs, as to frequent daily prayers in the church? Few of you, I fear, have them in your families: *I speak this to your shame* *. Nor must I fail to remind you, as you know I have often done, of that highly useful, and by no means terrible or difficult duty, of receiving the Lord's supper; enjoined all Christians, and yet absolutely slighted by most. But observe, at the same time, that private prayer and meditation, suited to your inward state, is a duty full as important, as public prayer, or hearing sermons, or partaking of the table of the Lord: and the latter, without the former, will be of small efficacy. You may, if you will, despise either or both: and they are commonly despised, to a degree not known in any other Christian country, nor in this before the present age. But the world is not the better for it: nor will you. Your virtue will become insecure, and grievously imperfect; your sense of piety will wither away; your hopes of futurity will grow faint; your fears of it, when you reflect, will strengthen; till you will be glad to throw off both together, if you can; and live and die like the beasts that perish. Others will learn, and in part from you, to think and act in the same manner; every one's profit, pleasure, anger or caprice, will be the only rule of his conduct: and

* 1 Cor. vi. 5. xv. 34.

what security of any single enjoyment of life can there be, in such a state of things?

But then, alas! going through every exercise of devotion, both here and at home, merely to do our share towards keeping society in good order, is policy, not religion: and going through them for the sake of the outward act, without care to improve by them, is superstition; mistaking the means for the end. *The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men,* not to fix their expectations of future happiness on forms of any sort, but to *teach them, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, they should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works* *. These are the fundamental doctrines of Christianity: and I appeal to your consciences, whether they are not also the doctrines, which I have perpetually inculcated upon you: though with mixtures, no doubt too frequent, of human infirmity and error. Yet notwithstanding these, I trust, through God's mercy, I can safely say with St. Paul, *Ye know, from the first day that I came among you, how I have kept back nothing that was profitable to you, but have shewed and taught you; testifying repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.* And could I say also, that I had done this, in a proper degree, *from house to house,* as well as *publicly;* then I might, with him too, *take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men* †. But, though I hope I have never been backward to embrace oppor-

* Tit. ii. 11—14. † Acts xx. 18. 20, 21. 26.

tunities of this sort, when offered me; yet that I have not more diligently sought them, and laboured to introduce more serious discourse into my ordinary visits to you, I am sensible is a fault, which neither the uncommonness of such conversation, nor the fear of disgusting persons by it, are sufficient to excuse. Allow me therefore to make you such amends, as I can, for this and all my defects, by admonishing you solemnly now, and leaving it on your hearts, that religion is the greatest and most important of truths; that the business of this transitory life, compared with which, profits, pleasures, honours, acquisitions of all sorts, are trifles and follies, is the preparing for an endless one to come; that the true preparation consists in active love to God and man, and virtue; that such love can never be duly excited or maintained within us, but by the methods which Heaven hath directed; and that these are, a deep conviction of our guilt and weakness; an earnest and daily application to our heavenly Father, in faith of the merits of his crucified Son, for the pardon of our transgressions, and the sanctifying influences of his Holy Spirit; a constant attentive use of those ordinances, by which he hath appointed both to be conveyed; a conscientious watchful care of governing our actions, words and thoughts, not by the dictates of inclination or fashion, but the precepts of reason and Scripture. If I have taught any of you these things effectually, God's name be praised: teach them your children, your servants, your friends; for neglecting their instruction is partaking in their sins. If I have not; for His sake, and that of your souls, learn them now: else *I have preached,* and *you have believed, in vain* *; and woe will be to me, or you, or both of us, at the great day.

* 1 Cor. xv. 2.

You have peculiar cause to *take heed how you hear* *. Persons of high rank every where, and this parish hath many such, are concerned beyond others to be *patterns of good works* †; and are too commonly beyond others patterns of bad ones. Both they, and the middle part of you, live amongst innumerable incitements to unlawful gratifications, unfit expences; and waste of precious time, even the most precious of all, that of this day, in idle pernicious amusements. And the contagion of this over-grown wicked city tempts the lowest part of you, most dangerously, to all sorts of vices, and all sorts of crimes. Think then, how carefully you ought to preserve yourselves and yours, by the antidote of God's word and worship, from so destructive and deceitful poisons.

Great numbers of you have attended here very assiduously: you must have felt something stirred within you, that hath induced you to it: the hopes of your salvation depend on the fruit, which that shall bring forth: and surely then you will not let it be blasted, and die away. To many of you I have spoken many years; to some as long as you can remember: what benefit have you received? Barely receiving pleasure is nothing. It will rather aggravate your condemnation, if what hath affected you, hath not influenced you. Are you then become real, practical, inward, uniform Christians? If not; you are now going to have another teacher: mind what you are taught in another manner, or you are undone for ever. *But beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak* ‡.

Yet still, supposing you are truly religious, a further exceedingly material question is, To what degree

* Luke viii. 18. † Tit. ii. 7. ‡ Heb. vi. 9.

in religion are you arrived? Is it a confirmed, lively, increasing one; or faint and tottering? Unless you gain ground, you will lose it: if you are negligent, you will fall: and if you imagine yourselves as pious and virtuous, as you need be; you are almost as far from it as you can be. Search then diligently, strengthen what is weak, and add what is deficient; *that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing* *. Whatever due instruction I may have omitted to give you, it ought to have been, and is, your concern to supply it to yourselves: and if I have in any measure performed that duty as I ought; remember, improvement will be expected from you, in proportion to the advantages which you have enjoyed. Through God's mercy, some of you, that were bad, I have cause to think are become good; and some, that were good, become better: but, alas! how few are these, amongst the thousands, of whom this parish consists! O may there prove to be many more, than are come to my knowledge! Else I *must give account* of the success of my ministry *with grief* †: for the largest and best part of it hath been employed on you: and fain therefore would I persuade myself, that it will be found to have produced a tolerable share of good effect. *For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? are not even ye, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming* ‡? But however I have failed hitherto, let me not, I beseech you, fail now to obtain, that if ever I have said any thing to you, which raised any one Christian purpose or desire in your hearts, you would at length set yourselves to recollect and accomplish it; and that if you have experienced nothing of this kind from my preaching, you would the more conscientiously open your breasts to the impressions of that, which you will attend next:

* [illegible]s i. 4. † Heb. xiii. 17. ‡ 1 Thess. ii. 19.

for glad shall I be, to have promoted your spiritual welfare, be it only by this final request; and to learn that the seed, which shall be sown from henceforward, yields beyond comparison a more plentiful harvest, than that which preceded. For *God is my record*, if I may presume to adopt the Apostle's words, *how greatly I long after you all, in the bowels of Jesus Christ; and this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more, in knowledge and all judgment; that ye may approve the things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of the Lord, being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God**. *Let* then *your conversation* [illegible] *that whether I come and see you, or be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind*†; *not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, working out your own salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do*‡.

Understand me not to mean taking an absolute and final leave of you. *As long as I am in this tabernacle*, to speak the language of St. Peter, *I* shall *think it meet, if desired and able, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance*§. But this is the last time I shall stand here in that peculiar relation to you, which I have borne so long. *And now*, therefore, *brethren*, to conclude with pronouncing over you the solemn farewell of St. Paul, *I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified*‖. There may we meet again, never to part more!

* Phil. 8—11. † Ver. 27. ‡ Phil. ii. 12, 13.
§ 2 Pet. i. 13. ‖ Acts xx. 32.

SERMON X.

PREACHED BEFORE THE GOVERNORS OF THE LONDON HOSPITAL, OR INFIRMARY, FOR THE RELIEF OF SICK AND DISEASED PERSONS, ESPECIALLY MANUFACTURERS, AND SEAMEN IN MERCHANTS' SERVICE, &c. AT THE PARISH-CHURCH OF ST. LAWRENCE-JEWRY, ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1754.

ROMANS xii. 8.

He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity: he that ruleth, with diligence: he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

Of all the benevolent feelings, which God hath planted in our nature, compassion is the most valuable. For it prompts us the most directly to relieve the miserable, whose distresses are much greater, than the enjoyments of the happy can be here below: and yet, without the call of this tender sympathy, we should, far oftener than we do, turn our eyes from them, and leave them to their fate. Persons of all ranks are frequently in circumstances, that demand pity. But the higher part of the world have it more in their power to avoid sufferings, than the lowest: and it is easier to assist the latter effectually. Their poverty alone, indeed, if they are well able to provide themselves necessaries, wants no assistance. It is one requisite state in the scale of things, appointed by the wisdom of Providence: and allows

them a very comfortable enjoyment of life. But if work be scarce, or their families large, they may be grievously straitened, even in health; and in sickness, their condition, though single, is lamentable; and, when married, often extremely so. If only a child be sick, they have seldom leisure to attend it duly: but if the parents are sick, all the children must be neglected; and the labour, which used to maintain them, cease. They are destitute, both of knowledge what to do, and of money to procure directions and medicines, nay, perhaps, proper food. They follow, at random, the suggestions of neighbours, no wiser than themselves: or, after languishing long, and growing worse than they needed, have recourse for cure, often to ignorant, often to rapacious creatures; who, if they chance to recover, yet strip them of all, and load them with debts, that disquiet the rest of their days; and too commonly drive them to destructive cordials, which unhappily the most needy can afford; or desperate acts of injustice to others, or violence to their own persons.

Religion, humanity, common prudence, loudly require us to rescue them from such dreadful evils. For they are our brethren, and God hath committed them to our care: we owe to their industry all that we enjoy; and, without their aid, should be far more helpless than they. It is true, many of them fall into diseases and want through their own faults: and bounty to them may encourage those faults. But many also, with the utmost diligence and parsimony, can but just live. Now surely such ought to have the comfort of knowing, that in all events they shall be secured from extremities. And, even could we distinguish the blamable from the rest, we should make allowances to them, for ignorance, frailty, temp-

tation: as we hope God and man will to us, who have less excuse. While they are well, indeed, it will be right to let them fare more hardly: but neglecting them, when they are ill, is exposing them to perish, is next to murdering them. Their distemper, it must be owned, is from God's hand: but he commands us, both by nature and Scripture, to alleviate it, if we can: and doubtful consequences afford no plea to the contrary. How do we know, that mercy, exercised prudently, will not reclaim them; or that refusing it will prove a warning to them, or to others?

If then the sick poor ought to have relief, what is the best manner of giving it? Barely supplying them with food, is doing little or nothing towards their cure: and every day's continuance of their sickness, that can be prevented, is just so much unnecessary addition of wretchedness to themselves, and of damage to the public. If we furnish them with money also, they will often misapply it. If we procure them advice and medicines: dispersed, and unprovided, and unteachable as they are, the charge will usually be heavy, and the success very uncertain. Therefore parochial infirmaries have been erected, where they could; and may be of considerable use, but far inferior to larger hospitals. They are much more liable to the bad influence of private interest and partiality: governors, practitioners, attendants, will seldom be near so well qualified; and the cost of each patient will be vastly greater. Public hospitals then are evidently the most desirable. There, cheats will never apply: proper objects may have what is needful, as soon as ever they are indisposed: if able, may go on with their business; if not, may be taken into the house. Thus, in both cases, they partake of the united skill of learned persons, almost as largely as

the highest of their betters. And, in the latter case, their families are disburdened of them: their lodgings are much quieter and wholesomer, than their own can easily be: their physic is duly given, their diet and whole regimen suited to their condition; and the symptoms and turns of their disease watched over, and reported, by experienced nurses. Then further, the art of healing is improved in these places beyond all others: not, as the vulgar sometimes fancy, by rash trials of dangerous experiments; but by frequent occasions for able professors to consult, and ingenious candidates to learn from them, to the common advantage of all ranks of men.

But, though public infirmaries are in general highly useful; and have accordingly been set up in many parts of this nation lately; and in none, I believe, laid down, again or disliked: yet they are the most useful in the most populous cities. For to these, helpless wretches need not be sent from a distance, but are always at hand in them: they contain many poor strangers, that come occasionally; many sojourners, that have no legal settlements. And besides, even such as have, are less known to the rich, and less minded, amidst their hurry of business or pleasure, than in villages or smaller towns. Now multitudes of these are continually falling sick, and receiving hurts: and, if left to themselves in their miserable cellars and garrets, must suffer beyond conception, and most of them die. As therefore this is, to speak moderately, one of the largest of cities; and the busiest also, which increases accidents; hospitals are peculiarly necessary for it.

Some may think there were enough before the erection of ours. But the contrary is manifest: for the others are not emptier since. And though, in-

stead of six beds, with which it began thirteen years ago, it hath now one hundred and thirty-five, which have been filled near nine times each during the last year; yet a large proportion of pitiable objects, brought in or recommended, have been rejected for want of room: how cutting a disappointment to them, you may, by supposing their misfortunes your own, in some low degree imagine. Of out-patients, there have been nine thousand four hundred within the same time; and were, on the first of January last, sixteen hundred on the books: which great resort, a remarkable distinction of our hospital from all others, proves the necessity of it, particularly in that quarter; and, at the same time, the good success of the remedies administered in it. But still that success would be vastly augmented, if more could be taken in: because from a distance many cannot come at all for advice; and few will come for it so often, or follow it so strictly, as they should: nor will they be either dieted or nursed at home near so well.

It may seem an objection to the enlargement of hospitals, that the inhabitants within the bills of mortality are lessening. But alas! their diseases and distresses are increasing at the same time. Intemperance, especially in spirituous liquors, and debauchery, destroy their health and fruitfulness: love of pleasures and amusements, makes them idle and necessitous; and contempt of religion leaves bad inclinations unrestrained. Were we wise, the utmost zeal would be shewn to stop this torrent of folly and sin, by the authority, and above all by the example, of superiors; which, especially when it is bad, the next beneath them will imitate; and so downwards, to the lowest of all. For it is a strange defect in policy, not to think of preventing persons from making them-

selves useless and wretched, but only of restoring them to a condition of doing it again. But unless the former be vigorously attempted by well-advised methods, of which God grant us better hope, there will be a growing demand for hospitals, till the number of our people is reduced yet further.

Still it may be alleged, that the burthen of supporting them, instead of resting, as it doth, on a few, should be laid on the community by a law. But the poor cannot make this law; nor doth it appear that the rich will: not to say, that if it were made, the charitable would lose one principal method of satisfying their own minds, as well as others, that they are truly such. And besides, how are we sure that the care would be so effectual, and the charge, indeed our own share of it, less, or so little, under the management of legal officers, *taking the oversight by constraint, or for lucre,* as of those who take it *willingly, and of a ready mind**? However, at present, hospitals must depend on voluntary gifts, as they have done in time past.

Not that this excellent institution began early in the world: which may seem very strange. But possibly distempers were formerly fewer. And certainly among the ancient heathens, tenderness of heart towards the wretched was no common virtue †. Nor

* 1 Peter v. 2.

† The direction and practice of Cato the censor was, to sell slaves, when they became diseased, or otherwise unfit for labour. *Cato de Re Rustica, Plut. in Cat.* And Suetonius saith, that in the reign of Claudius, (when the Romans were polished in the highest degree, and philosophy had tried its utmost influence upon them), some exposed their sick slaves to perish in the isle of Æsculapius at Rome: on which account the emperor ordered, that exposing them should be deemed giving them their liberty, if they recovered; and that, if any chose rather to put them to death, it should be punished, as murder. *Suet. in Claud.* c. 25.

did it among the Jews extend far: though Moses enjoins it towards all men, repeatedly and pathetically *. But our blessed Saviour, the singular good nature of whose doctrine is one strong evidence of its divine original, besides teaching more efficaciously than had ever been done before, the obligation of mutual love in general, hath particularly enforced mercy to the sick, by his miracles of healing, by his parable of the good Samaritan †, by his affecting description of his own future behaviour at the great day of judgment ‡. In consequence of this, we find the primitive Christians the most benevolent of men §: and the affection of their successors to each other, a subject of general wonder ‖. We find those of Rome, who were the richest, sending alms to their brethren throughout the earth ¶: and those of Alexandria and Carthage, in the desolations of a dreadful plague, ministering to the infected with astonishing courage, while the heathens gave proofs of the most shocking neglect and barbarity **. Nay, those of the whole eastern empire, just after the several cities of it had been persecuting them, in the reign of Maximin, were the only persons, who assisted others in the double distress of pestilence and famine; attending on the dying, burying the dead, feeding the hungry,

* Exod. xxii. 21. xxiii. 9. 12. Lev. xix. 33, 34. xxv. 25. 36, 37. Deut. x. 19. xxiv. 14, 15. 17—22. xxvii. 19.

† Luke x. 30—37. ‡ Matth. xxv. 31—46.

§ Acts ii. 44, 45. iv. 32—37. xi. 27—30. xxiv. 17. Rom. xv. 25, 26. 2 Cor. viii. 1—4. ix. 1, 2. Col. i. 4. 1 Thess. iv. 9. 2 Thess. i. 3. 1 Tim. v. 10. Philem. ver. 7. Rev. ii. 19. Clem. Rom. Ep. 1. § 1, 2. 55.

‖ Tert. Apol. c. 39. 42.

¶ Dionys. ap. Euseb. H. E. l. 4. c. 23, & l. 7. c. 5.

** Dionys. ap. Euseb. H. E. l. 7. c. 22. Cypr. Vit. per Pontium, p. 5.

without distinction: which they did continually, with such tenderness and bounty in every respect, that they and their God were publicly celebrated and honoured for it by all men *. Nor do Christian writers alone ascribe to them this character. The profane Lucian acknowledges and ridicules their plentiful almsgiving †. The apostate emperor Julian confesses, that the worshippers of his gods disregarded their own poor, and the Christians maintained those of both professions. He gives exhortations to the former, undeniably taken out of the New Testament, to amend, and imitate the Galileans in this and many other points. But, distrusting their effect, he had begun to appropriate large revenues to the support of the credit of paganism, against the influences of the charity of Christians ‡. Nor were these bountiful only to make and preserve converts; for they continued so after their faith became the reigning one §. Then, for it was impracticable before, a vast variety of beneficent foundations, and, amongst them, hospitals for the sick, things unknown to preceding ages ‖, rose from the private liberalities of believers ¶, and were authorized and regulated by

* Euseb. H. E. l. 9. c. 8.

† De morte Peregrini, p. 996, 997, 998. Ed. Bourdelot. Par. 1615.

‡ Julian. Fragm. Ep. p. 290, 305. Ep. 49. p. 429, &c. Ed. Spanh. Lips. 1696. Greg. Nazianz. Orat. 3. p. 101, 102. Ed. Billii, Par. 1630. Sozomen. Hist. Eccl. l. 5. c. 16.

§ Chrysost. Hom. 66. in Matth. p. 658. tom. 7. Ed. Montf.

‖ The word *valetudinarium* is in several Roman authors: but seems to mean only a receptacle for the sick servants of a family, in or near the house.

¶ Jerom saith, that Fabiola, a wealthy Christian widow, of a noble Roman family, who died in his time, first erected a public infirmary: *Prima omnium νοσοκομεῖον instituit, in quo agrotantes colligeret de*

the civil power *: which have spread wherever the Gospel hath spread: and make one principal glory of our own church, our own times, and the reign of our gracious sovereign. These facts I hope will recommend, not only charity to Christians, but Christianity to charitable persons: and shew the wisdom of learning from Scripture the proper directions for carrying on the good work, which we are met to countenance.

Now there can be no better directions, than those of the text. For it comprehends the three necessary points: a due provision, a vigilant superintendence, a willing execution.

I. A due provision. *He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity:* fairly allowing every right motive its full effect upon him. The mere instinct of pity will operate irregularly, and sometimes hurtfully. Mere worldly prudence will be generally misled by present self-interest. A sense of moral fitness, without the sanction of divine authority, will scarce ever produce much fruit, in common soils at least. And the religion of reason alone, will but seldom furnish precepts determinate enough, or excite hopes and fears powerful enough, to supply the deficiency. Doubtless we Christians ought sincerely to esteem those, who, from any true principle, benefit their fellow-creatures; but at the same time earnestly to pray God, that he would make them *altogether such as we are* †. The Gospel weakens no other inducement: and adds

plateis, et consumpta languoribus atque inedia miserorum membra foveret. Ep. 84. Ed. Bened. 77. Ed. Veron. And Gregory the Presbyter, in his Life of Nazianzen, saith, that Basil, who lived in the same age with Jerom, built a large hospital for lepers, with charity money, which he collected for that purpose.

* Cod. l. 1. tit. 2. leg. 15. 19. 22. tit. 3. leg. 18.

† Acts xxvi. 29.

such persuasive ones of its own, that whoever embraces it *in simplicity and godly sincerity**, must be charitable. And hence I presume it is, that the word translated *simplicity* in the text, signifies liberality in several places of the New Testament†, and perhaps in no book written before it. For one, who is a Christian *in singleness of heart*‡, can neither covet immoderate wealth, nor hoard up against improbable accidents, nor make false pleas of inability, nor examine the merits of the distressed with rigour§, nor confine his alms to some favourite objects of beneficence; but will fairly consider the claims of every different sort. And none hath better, than this Hospital, on various accounts.

It stands remote from others, in the neighbourhood of innumerable mariners and artificers, whom their manner of life subjects to many grievous casualties and diseases. Of these it takes care, if the case so require (and there have been three hundred and thirty such during the last year), without any recommendation: but in all cases, without any payment on their admission, or any security for their burial, should they die; which two demands exclude the most helpless from other hospitals, and throw them on ours; but the advantage increases far beyond the expence.

Its support hath always been from spontaneous gifts: and, within the compass of the annual account lately published, they have fallen short of the disbursements by three hundred and fifty pounds. Now

* 2 Cor. i. 12. † 2 Cor. viii. 2. ix. 11. 13. Jam. i. 5.

‡ Acts ii. 46. Eph. vi. 5. Col. iii. 22.

§ Le Clerc apprehends, that the Apostle meant particularly to give this direction: which some of the early Christians carried to a great length. See the Shepherd of Hermas, l. 2. mand. 2.

it could not subsist, much less be enlarged as it ought, were this diminution to continue. But we trust it is only temporary; proceeding from zeal to carry on with speed a separate, but important part of the general design. A new structure, discreetly postponed at first, is now erecting, in a purer air, with larger and loftier rooms, yet wholly contrived for health not shew, in which far greater numbers will be far better accommodated. And, indeed, the erection of it is a double charity, by employing the healthy poor, as well as providing for the unhealthy. On this near eighteen hundred pounds have been laid out, in the last twelvemonth, more than hath been received in that time: and only two hundred and ninety-three remain in bank. The friends to it therefore, I hope, will not fail to consider, that the sooner it is finished, the sooner the money already expended on it will become useful, and the charge of having two houses at once will cease. And such, as were not friends to it, ought to consider also, that, while others are contributing to the building, the fund for the patients will sink, unless they supply the deficiency. When it is once completed, though larger donations will be wanted, than before it was begun; because more persons will be admitted than can now: yet, as the whole will be directly applied to their use; the benefit of the Hospital, in proportion to the cost, will be much more visible, than it hath been hitherto.

II. The second point is, a vigilant superintendence. *He that ruleth, with diligence.*

Some of the governors, indeed, cannot be expected to attend, unless on occasions very extraordinary. The mere honour of their names in the list of subscribers will do great service; and their occasional recommendations and vindications of the charity, yet

reater. But the assistance of able and experienced ersons, as visitors, (an office to be faithfully dis-harged, when undertaken), and of considerable per-ons also at the weekly and other boards, will be a ıeritorious addition to their contributions; and the ıore, as only the desire of doing good can render it greeable to them. This will satisfy the world, that very thing goes on well. For good government is hat distributes properly the nourishment, that be-efactions furnish; and animates the whole machine; f which, care or neglect will wonderfully augment r frustrate the use. In a system compounded of so ıany parts, precaution to obviate disorders, or inter-osition to rectify them, must be continual. And here no positive faults appear, admirable improve-ıents may be invented, or imported from other laces. Indeed proposals for that end should not be ıshly made: but very candidly considered, when ıey are made, and yet not over-warmly pressed. or if they are right, in time they will prevail. And ıger contentions are solicitously to be avoided in all oints; partialities of every sort to be laid aside: the lvantage of the house to be solely kept in view, and ven that pursued with gentleness, and the most ob-ging mutual regards. But though dissension, like ı acute distemper, threatens the most loudly, and rings on the suddenest danger; yet, if the crisis be vourable, all may be as well or better than before: ıt languid supineness is a chronical disease, that roceeds with slow and silent, but surer steps, to-ards a dissolution. The former happens oftenest in ıe beginning of these undertakings; and I hope you 'e completely got over it: the latter in the pro-ress; of which therefore beware. Mark out and en-

gage fit persons to join with you, and succeed you, as acting governors: infuse the spirit of right management into them, and instruct them in the fundamental articles of it.

One article, of almost unspeakable moment, is cleanliness: which you have lately consulted with much prudence, in providing change of fresh beds. But frequent renewal of fresh air is found to be another indispensable requisite for the recovery, and even the preservation of health, especially when numbers are confined together in the same room. Yet few sufficiently know this: and attendants, to save themselves trouble, are unwilling to regard it: and the change must be made, in the case of the sick, with no little caution. An excellent man *, who hath long been an ornament to his profession as a clergyman, and to his country as a philosopher, hath shewn the best means, as well as the necessity, of making provision for this purpose: and will gladly give minuter directions; which may be of considerable benefit in your present house, and of much greater in fitting up your new one.

But there is another article, on which I must beg leave to enlarge a little more: that of religious worship and instruction. Prayers are read on two weekdays: but they should be read, and a sermon preached, on the Lord's day also; as, I believe, is done in every other hospital. The omission will be interpreted, if continued, a slight on Christianity: and cannot fail to grieve extremely all the pious part of the sick: whereas public devotions and exhortations then, will not only comfort these, but probably awaken many of the rest to a reverence of the day: which, being their only one of leisure, must be the

* Dr. Stephen Hales.

best of their lives, or the worst *. But bare general forms have often small efficacy. And therefore a distinct personal application ought moreover to be made to each of them: not to fill their heads with empty words, or with idle, and much less with hurtful notions, but to excite in their souls a strong and practical sense, that He, from whom they are, and on whom they depend here and hereafter, hath sent from heaven to *teach them, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, they should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ: who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity; and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works* †.

These doctrines, proposed to them compassionately and discreetly, when their condition permits them to reflect without hazard, will give to the well-disposed inexpressible consolation; and to the worst no more than useful terror. A penitent conviction of their past sins will instantly render them humble, contented, orderly, and observant in all respects: it must, if they die, have some good influence on their future state: and may have the very best on many by-standers. But if they recover, as eight in nine do, fixing it deeply in their hearts will prompt them to every thing right, for themselves, and all with whom they are concerned; will restrain them from every thing wrong, and make them happy under all restraints and all afflictions, by the assurance of an eternal recompense: which inestimable effects

* On this admonition, the late Lord Viscount Folkestone gave privately an allowance for performing the Sunday service, till the hospital provided for it.

† Titus ii. 12, 13, 14.

nothing else can have. Possibly scarce any principles of Christianity or morality have ever been taught them; for, in this land of abused liberty, that is determined by chance, or arbitrary choice. Possibly none ever will, unless it be here: and here they may be inculcated on them with peculiar advantage. They have leisure to think: are kept cool and low; have not their vicious companions round them, to deride seriousness; but fellow-sufferers, to applaud it. They experience the value of religion and virtue; for to these they owe the tender care, that is taken of them. Pious books are read in the wards, by such as can, to the rest: which will be much better minded, after separate exhortations made to each. And a small gift of short admonitory tracts, judiciously chosen for them, when they go away, will tend very powerfully, through God's blessing, to perpetuate the impressions, which they have received. At least we shall thus have tried what, even in worldly wisdom, we ought. A considerable share of the poverty and diseases, and some share of the accidents, that bring persons to hospitals, arises from their wickedness: and therefore amending them is the way to prevent their return thither. Public wealth and strength consists, partly in the numbers, partly in the usefulness of the people. Now both will bear a near proportion to their morals; on which also the private security and domestic enjoyment of life almost entirely rests. And many of the poor wretches cured, if they go away as vile as they come, will have cause to wish, with their families and the community, that their distempers had proved mortal. Even supposing men could be kept sufficiently in order, against their judgments and wills, by dread of temporal punishments; their situation must be a very uneasy one:

whereas thankful obedience to a just Ruler, and gracious Rewarder, is the most pleasing motive imaginable. But evidently they cannot: nor any where so little, as where the limitation of the magistrate's authority by law is the strictest. And they must have a strangely self-denying zeal against religion, who had rather, that those about them should despise it and be mischievous, than revere it and be harmless.

Indeed the performance of all, that I have been recommending, will require some addition of expence: but not much in comparison, not more than is allowed elsewhere, not without receiving a valuable consideration in return. Good persons will contribute to it; will, if desired, bear the whole of it; will be more liberal to the other parts of the charity for it: the reputation of the house will be heightened by it; which, I must tell you, suffers from delaying so necessary a provision.

I would only say further on the second head, that when patients are discharged, the good advice of the board, and of the governors who recommended them, may have vast weight with them: especially if it be enforced by some assistance, either from the common stock, or private liberality, for present support, till they get strength and business.

III. The third and last point is a willing execution. *He that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.* For *shewing mercy* is understood by the best commentators * to signify here, what the like phrase comprehends in the history of the benevolent Samaritan †, ministering personally to the objects of the charity: and *cheerfulness* ‡ denotes good-will, both to them and to the employment. All depends at last on the care and

* Ἐλεοῦντας hîc vocat, qui ægrotis aderant. GROT.

† Luke x. 37.

‡ Ἱλαρότης hoc loco promptitudinem animi significat. GROT.

kindness of those, who are engaged in this immediate application: in which they must indeed see melancholy and shocking sights, and perform low and disgustful offices. But religion hath the secret to make every thing agreeable: and their occupations are so much more beneficial to mankind, and better fitted to improve their own hearts, than Providence hath allotted to most others, that they have cause on reflection to be satisfied, and even pleased, with their condition.

The general duty of all, who attend on this good work is, industriously to further, and in no respect to counteract, the intent of it: to abstain from provoking, discouraging, profane or immodest, behaviour and discourse: and to deter or dissuade, so far as they can, every one concerned, from whatever is faulty. The particular duty of him, who ministers in holy things, hath been already intimated. Physicians and surgeons are habituated to humanity and decency: and will undoubtedly shew, and require that all under them shew, as much of it to these poor creatures, as to their betters. The officers of the house must not only be upright, frugal, diligent, themselves; but see, both that inferior servants be assiduous and punctual, faithful and impartial, gentle and tender, which I understand is expressly charged on them; and likewise, that the patients conform to the rules prescribed them. Failures in the very lowest part of the management, and that seem but small, may be extremely hurtful to the sick: and, though they are not, will be mentioned by them in strong terms, when they come out: and such reports will reach their recommenders and others, and in all likelihood be aggravated, to the unknown disadvantage of the charity.

But the characters and conduct, both of the go-

vernors and of those whom they intrust, give such assurance, that all is and will be carried on well, that I proceed, in conclusion, boldly to ask your generous contributions to this excellent undertaking.

Most of the piteous objects, for whom it provides, become such in working for you. Long voyages, or dangerous enterprises, or employments liable to mischances, or labour on unwholesome materials, or earnest active industry, or close confinement and sedentary diligence, are the usual causes of their sufferings; and the principal sources of our national riches and grandeur, of the conveniences and elegances and enjoyments of life. So that indeed they are martyrs to the public service. And were it only to the public luxury, the fault would not be in them, but in you, their superiors, who dispose of them so: and who ought not surely to let them lie unrelieved in languishment or torture, for having furnished you the means of pomp and delicacy. If you do, you are sadly unworthy of the kind Providence, which hath exalted you above them, to be its own stewards for their welfare.

But they are more directly the servants of you, merchants and traders: to whom they are instruments of earning wealth and honours, for a bare subsistence. Think then, what you should feel in their situation, were you neglected after all, when illness comes upon you. Think also, that industrious persons are more in number for every one such, whose life is saved, or who is sooner or more perfectly restored to health. These considerations will clearly shew you, that all persons of eminence in trade should be liberal subscribers; and the rest occasional, if they cannot be stated, benefactors. The present is one occasion. The banker, or the box, or any friend of the

hospital will afford you other opportunities, when you please. And you well know, that small sums frequently given, make a large total: besides that even the widow's mite singly is precious in the sight of God *.

Some, of various ranks, may not know objects enough for their charity: may not have leisure or convenience to enquire after them: may not care to trust or trouble others with doing it. Here then is a way open for such to bestow, unquestionably well, just as much as they wish. And they should give the more, because they are put to no difficulties, in order to give. Others have had servants, or dependents, or neighbours, under cure in the infirmary, of whom they would else have taken the charge themselves. Now these ought at least to reimburse the infirmary: for still they will be gainers by it; but else, they will in effect defraud it.

Persons professing religion cannot but be sensible, that were they to let unbelievers excel them in acts of bounty, it would afford them such a triumph, as Heaven forbid they should ever have. And persons indifferent or unfavourable to religion, most of them profess the highest regard to benevolence: as indeed, if doing good to men be the only homage they will pay to God, surely they ought to be very abundant in it. We invite them therefore to a fair contention with us on this head. But at the same time we must admonish them, that without moral self-government, and dutiful piety, they will on the whole do harm to their fellow-creatures: or could that be otherwise, will fail of becoming inwardly such, as their all-wise Creator expects. And it is grievous to think, that with some qualities so amiable, by the wilful or care-

* Mark xii. 41—44.

less leglect of the rest, they should deserve condemnation, instead of reward. Still *they shall obtain* more *mercy*, than if they had not been *merciful* *: and therefore, however wicked in other respects, it is highly their interest to be virtuous in this. But *charity shall cover the multitude of sins* †, only when it proceeds from an efficacious resolution of universal amendment. And then it is peculiarly, both a proper thankful claim to God's promise of forgiveness, and likewise a proper compensation to men for past injuries and omissions: if it be sufficiently plentiful; and bestowed on the sufferers, when they can be found; or on the poor, as their substitutes, when they cannot. I hope therefore, that every one here, whose conscience tells him he hath offended against his brethren and his heavenly Father, will take this method of reconciliation now without delay.

If desire of increasing your wealth obstructs your liberality; you cannot, even in this world, receive near so much true satisfaction from having added a little to it, as from having done the great good, which that little is capable of doing. Besides, what is to become of your wealth? Your heirs are to have it. And how are they to employ it? If they are to perform acts of beneficence with it, why may not you as well? If they are only to go on augmenting it, where is the use or end of that? And if they are to squander it, as sooner or later they will, you are only contriving to make yourself and them a reproach, in contrary ways.

Suppose then, on the other hand, it be pleasures and amusements, that intercept your charity: of what kind are they? Many fashionable ones are mean, irrational, destructive of the time, fortune,

* Matt. v. 7. † 1 Pet. iv. 8.

health, temper, principles, of those who delight in them. What will be your credit and weight now, what the esteem of your memory, and the state of your posterity, an age or two hence, if you live, and teach them to live, only or chiefly to such things? At least intermix with them somewhat worthy of notice and of praise. Retrench a sin or a folly, and give the cost to these poor creatures. Put out of your power, by spending well, what else you would have spent ill. This will be of double service to you.

But possibly you devote the superfluity of your income to innocent entertainment, ornaments, decorations. And is it fitting then, that you should be humouring your fancy, or displaying your taste, while wretches around you are perishing and unassisted? But such things, you will say, employ the poor, and so do good. Why, allowing that they do good; which however is not true, without several exceptions: yet the poor, who are incapable of employment, should be considered first. Others indeed *may* suffer, if you overlook them: but these *are* suffering. Others will make some shift; perhaps a better for the public, if not for themselves too: but these can make none. Besides, you may be a great deal surer, that the good, to which self-indulgence cannot prompt you, is meant for good: and it will procure you far more esteem from the worthy and considerate. Some of the vain and thoughtless perhaps may affect to ridicule you for it. But only avoid injudicious projects of beneficence, and degrees of liberality inconsistent with other obligations or proprieties: and you will be abundantly supported, within and without. Private parsimony, when moderate, and combined with generosity in matters of public concern, was highly celebrated, even by heathens, in

former ages *; and will to the latest be an honour, and selfish pomp and luxury a disgrace, to all nations and all persons, that are noted for either. The givers of memorable single benefactions indeed will be longest and most extensively respected: but such as join with others, will also have praise for it, equal to their modest desires. In our hospital particularly, their names and contributions are recorded, and openly proposed for imitation: while yet they, who choose it, may be as secret in their donations to this charity, as to any.

Possibly you may think, it will be sufficiently carried on without your help. But what if every body were to think so? Besides, how do you know it will? And if it would, your concern is, not so much that good works be done, as that you do your share towards them.

But you give to other charities, to other hospitals. And so do many of the bountiful friends to this. Why then may not, why then should not, you be such a friend to it likewise? But, at the very least, be not an enemy. That we demand, as justice. If we are wrong in any thing, we shall be glad to correct it: if deficient, to supply it. If we think we excel in any thing, we heartily wish we could excel in nothing. If we have chanced to take a name, that may seem too lofty: we had rather never have taken it, than have given offence by what was intended, not to arrogate the least pre-eminence above our elder sisters; but only to express, in the strongest manner, how numerous the objects, for whom provision is wanted, were; and to whom we principally trusted for the means of relieving them.

* Cic. pro L. Flacco. § 12. Hor. Od. 2. 15. 10—20. Sat. 2. 2. 102—105.

Let us all therefore go on, amicably as well as diligently, in this and every method of lessening misery, and promoting goodness and happiness, in the world, from an humble sense of duty to the Maker of it: till the exercise of the virtues, adapted to our present suffering state, improve our souls into a fitness for that approaching time of enjoyment; when *God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes, and there shall be no more death, nor sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain* *.

* Rev. xxi. 4.

SERMON XI.

PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF ST. MARY-LE-BOW, DECEMBER 4, 1754, AT THE YEARLY MEETING OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES.

MALACHI iii. 16.

Then they, that feared the Lord, spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it; and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.

THIS prophecy was delivered long after the return of the Jews from Babylon; when they had ceased in general to be superstitious and idolatrous, for it scarce accuses them once of either sin, but were falling into the opposite extreme of indifference about all religion. Many of the priests themselves performed their functions carelessly and contemptuously, from a principle of mere worldly interest*; and either neglected to instruct others, or misled them†. The people, partly, without question, in consequence of this, were destitute of zeal for God's worship; *said it was a weariness, and snuffed at it;* sacrificed to him the refuse of their cattle‡, *robbed him in tithes and offerings* §, married heathens without scruple ‖, broke their marriage vows by adultery ¶, *dealt treacherously*

* Mal. i. 6, 7. 10. † Ibid. ii. 7, 8. ‡ Ibid. i. 13, 14.
§ Ibid. iii. 8, &c. ‖ Ibid. ii. 11. ¶ Ibid. ii. 14.

every man against his brother*, were guilty of oppression and perjury†: for the prophet expressly charges them with all these crimes. And he adds, that they not only indulged, but applauded themselves in impiety and immorality: casting off with scorn the serious regard, which they had formerly paid to unpleasing rules of duty; and declaring those, who had fearlessly broke through them, the only wise persons. *Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord. Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and, What profit is it, that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of Hosts? And now we call the proud happy: yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered*‡. So that they still seem to have professed some belief in a sort of deity: but at the same time prevailed on themselves to fancy, that he was unconcerned about their treatment of himself, or each other.

How lively a picture this is, though drawn above two thousand years ago, of the free-livers and free-thinkers, as they have been called, of our own age, and how large and increasing the numbers of them are, I need not say: their practices, their discourse, their writings, shew it too plainly. The question is, while they behave thus, what should our behaviour be?

Now undoubtedly earnest endeavours ought to be used for reclaiming them. And such as are qualified for this employment, especially if they are likewise peculiarly called to it, should be conscientiously diligent in it: labouring to convince, both the avowedly profane and vicious, and all who lean towards them, of the unreasonableness and final uncomfort-

* Mal. ii. 10. † Ibid. iii. 5. ‡ Ibid. iii. 13, 14, 15.

ableness of their notions, the absurd rashness of their talk, the ruinous tendency of their conduct, even in this life, to themselves, to such as are most nearly connected with them, and to the public; but above all, of the certain future misery, which they must bring on their own heads, if the Maker of the world govern it with justice or wisdom, or indeed with real goodness to the whole; and for what other ends he could possibly create it, is utterly inconceivable.

But though every person of plain understanding and upright heart is capable of seeing these things; and most may represent them, with good effect, to such as err through inconsiderateness or bad suggestions only, yet many are not capable of debating them with acute and artful opponents: or if they were, still would not be a match, on other accounts, for the bold and overbearing, the contemptuous and ridiculing. Whatever cause a modest man, of common parts and attainments, were to maintain against such, the combat would be unequal, and therefore is better avoided by him. But supposing him ever so accomplished: what success can be expected against scornful levity, conceited self-sufficiency, hardened unfairness, or stupid sensuality? against those, who, as the Apostle admirably describes them, *walk in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts; who being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness**. Probably formal opposition would only provoke such to more shocking expressions of irreligion at the time,

* Eph. iv. 17, 18, 19.

and greater mischievousness afterwards. Therefore Solomon's general maxim and direction is: *he that reproveth a scorner, getteth to himself shame: and he that rebuketh a wicked man, getteth himself a blot. Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee* *.

Still they, to whose province it belongs, must, while there is any view of success, *instruct those who oppose themselves* † *reprove, rebuke* ‡, *exhort with all authority* ‖. And others must never even seem to countenanance licentious talk, and to give up the cause of religion when attacked; but *walk in wisdom toward them that are without*, that is, towards unbelievers; take care that *their speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt* §; becoming, inoffensive, discreet; and that they *be ready always to give an answer to every man, that asketh them a reason of the hope that is in them* ¶. But usually it will be most advisable, on all such occasions, to speak briefly: and in so mild a manner, that the party concerned may not think himself challenged to attempt a reply; yet in so home a one, that he may feel inwardly, and if possible also lastingly, the force of what is said to him: which he will oftener do, than he will care to own it. For *the words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened* **. Excepting what this act of charity may require, we shall do well to *keep our mouths, as it were with a bridle, while the ungodly is in our sight:* not disagreeably abstaining from all conversation, but studiously from all which they can be likely to pervert; *keeping silence*, when there is danger of that, *even from good*

* Prov. ix. 7, 8. † 2 Tim. ii. 25. ‡ 2 Tim. iv. 2.
‖ Tit. ii. 15. § Col. iv. 5, 6. ¶ 1 Pet. iii. 15.
** Eccles. xii. 11.

words *; and *not casting our pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend* † the well-meaning giver.

The duty therefore of the generality of Christians, in regard to the enemies of their faith and practice, besides pitying them and praying for them, goes little further, than first securing themselves, and those who belong to them, from the contagion: and determining with Joshua, that let others *serve whom* or what *they choose, they and their houses will serve the Lord* ‡: then, as opportunity may offer, *strengthening the* rest of their *brethren* §, and using the means of being mutually strengthened by them, in the same resolution.

This method, we find, the pious and virtuous took in the days of Malachi. Doubtless the faithful *priests and messengers of the Lord of Hosts*, whose *lips* were to *keep knowledge* ‖, uttered it also: *lifted up their voices like trumpets to shew the people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins* ¶. But of the bulk of believers we read, not that they were forward to dispute, indeed we may be sure they were backward to intermix, with unbelievers; but only, that *they who feared the Lord, spake often one to another*, certainly of things relating to his fear; *and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.*

Now in these words we have it plainly signified to us,

I. That serious conference amongst good persons is peculiarly needful in thoughtless and irreligious times.

II. That God observes and remembers, and will reward the proper use of it.

* Psa. xxxix. 2, 3. † Matt. vii. 6. ‡ Josh. xxiv. 15.
§ Luke xxii. 32. ‖ Mal. ii. 7. ¶ Is. lviii. 1.

These therefore shall be the two first heads of my discourse: and then

III. I shall apply them to the present occasion.

I. That serious conference among good persons is peculiarly needful in thoughtless and irreligious times.

Indeed we ought in all times to shew by our conversation, what we are: and shall, in some degree, shew it of course, whether we mean to do so, or not. If we express no concern for the interests of piety and virtue in our words, we shall be justly suspected of having but little in our thoughts. *For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things* *. Therefore, as it concerns us infinitely to know, of what sort of persons we are, so we should learn to judge of ourselves by our common talk, as well as our actions. For as *the fruit declareth, if the tree have been dressed, so is the utterance of a conception in the heart of man* †. If then the conceptions which we utter, the sort of language into which we naturally run, be, though not profane or immoral, yet frothy and vain and trifling; or, though of a graver kind, savour of the interests of this world only: let us take notice, that such as are the subjects that we dwell on, such in all likelihood are we. For in cases of much less moment, we are sufficiently apt to speak of things, about which we are solicitous: and is it not a very unpromising sign then, if we seldom or never speak any thing, which proves our solicitude for religion and morals? Possibly indeed the prevalence of bad custom in that respect, or fear to be thought guilty of affectation,

* Matth. xxii. 34, 35 † Ecclus. xxvii. 6.

may restain us from expressing our sentiments, when we could wish to do it. And, in the case of others, we should be as ready to allow this excuse, as there is any colour of reason. But in our own, we should examine strictly, what the real truth is: and amend our manner of conversing, for a memorial to amend likewise, if there be need, our inward dispositions.

By speaking seriously on proper occasions, we shall bind ourselves to act so; else the inconsistence will shame us. And besides, as we are strangely apt to grow languid and flat in our good inclinations, it is of vast importance, that we should stir up each other: which a word in season, or a mere hint, will often do surprisingly. *Iron sharpeneth iron*, saith the wise king: *so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend* *; whets him up to attempt improvements, and execute right purposes. In whatever we set to learn, partnership, joint advice, mutual incitement, imitation, emulation if there be room for it, have unspeakable force. Now we are most of us, God knows, but learners in piety, and perpetually in danger of going back. Therefore the Scripture directs us to *consider one another, to provoke to love and good works, to exhort one another*, as powerful means of *holding fast our faith* and integrity *without wavering* †. So that we have not only reason, but command for the practice: which will be further useful, by giving us caution and skill, as well as courage and spirit. The snares of wicked persons are many and artful: but the counsel of worthy and experienced friends may guard us even against the most dangerous of them. The temptations of the wicked one surround us continually: but communication with those, who *are not ignorant of his devices* ‡, may effectually pre-

* Prov. xxvii. 17. † Heb. x. 23, 24, 25. ‡ 2 Cor. ii. 11.

vent his getting advantage of us. Even general discourse with such, though we do not open ourselves to them by particular confidences, may be extremely beneficial to us: and especial trust reposed in them, on extraordinary occasions, with proportionable circumspection, may be yet more essentially serviceable.

But even where we can receive little instruction, we may enjoy however great satisfaction, from intimacy of acquaintance with *them who have obtained the like precious faith with ourselves* *; who think and act and hope and expect as we do: from uniting in friendship with those now, whom God, we trust, will unite with us in heavenly bliss to all eternity. We shall be far surer of finding these, upright, unenvious, considerate, benevolent, compassionate, than others, who have not equal inducements: we shall be able to converse with them more frankly and open-heartedly, as agreeing in our sentiments of the principal points, and depending on their candour where we differ: we shall have the pleasure of esteeming each others' characters; and rejoice in the consideration, that we place our chief regard on those, whom our Maker honours with his. What if they have some faults or indiscretions? Who else have so few, or so small? What if perhaps they are some of them not in all respects the most entertaining? The worthiness of their hearts will or ought to give us a higher pleasure, than the brightest of other accomplishments without it. What if they have not, all of them, the greatest compass of science, or strength of parts, or knowledge of the world? They are infinitely wiser in the necessary points, than multitudes who have. What if they cannot promote our

* 2 Peter i. 1.

temporal views? They will never betray us, they will never injure us; they will always forward us in the way to eternal happiness. Keeping at a distance from such as these, who, we must be sensible, merit other treatment; and paying court to persons of bad or no principles, and blamable lives, for the superficial agreeableness or misused abilities that they have, for the gay appearance they make, or the little present services, which they can do us; is so unequitable in itself, and so grievously and evidently prejudicial to the cause of religion and probity and common good; that they, who indulge themselves in it, have great need to suspect the rightness of their own minds, and to apprehend imminent danger of their being further depraved. There is indeed a variety of connexions in human affairs, that may often prevent us from taking the different notices of different characters, which are their due: but unless we honestly endeavour it, and contrive for it, as far as we can; and lament, not in words of form and excuse now and then, but from the bottom of our hearts constantly, that we cannot do it more; we are either bad persons within, or very imperfectly good. With whom then, let us ask ourselves, do we love to associate, and what familiarities do we choose? Can we say; if not, will we qualify ourselves for saying, with the Psalmist: *I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and keep thy commandments* *. *My delight is upon the saints, that are in the earth, and upon such as excel in virtue* †.

But conversing with religious people is peculiarly requisite in irreligious times; when *the godly man ceaseth*, when *the faithful fail from among the children of men* ‡. In proportion as the number becomes smaller,

* Psal. cxix. 63. † Psal xvi. 3. ‡ Psal. xii. 1.

it naturally invites to make the union stricter, on various accounts. Prevailing neglect of God and his commands can hardly fail to excite anger in pious breasts: but grief it must cause. *Rivers of water run down mine eyes, because men keep not thy law* *. Now both indignation and sorrow require vent. Do we then feel neither on this occasion? Or if we do, to whom shall we give them vent, but to such as will cordially sympathize with us? Or if we want not their acquaintance for any such reason, we may for another, that is more important. Our Saviour hath forewarned us, that *because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold* †. Were only those around us in this danger, we should labour to prevent it: but we ourselves run, it may be, an equal risk of declining, first into lukewarmness, then into doubt, then into apostasy. Therefore St. Paul directs to the same remedy with that in the text, as a sovereign and specific antidote. *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God: but exhort one another daily, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin* ‡. Some society we must have. By seeking that of good persons, we shall have less need to spend much of our time with the bad; and be less hurt by that portion, which we are obliged to give up to them. They will not so readily dare to tempt us: mere good breeding will be one check upon them, when they perceive, by the company we keep, and the tenor of our common speech agreeing with it, that we have made a Christian life our deliberate choice. And this will be a vast security and ease to us. It is in effect saying, though meekly and modestly, yet so as will awe the generality of the world, *Away from*

* Psal. cxix. 135. † Matth. xxiv. 12. ‡ Heb. iii. 12, 13.

*me, ye wicked: I will keep the commandments of my God**.

Indeed such declarations, what side we are of, by proper expressions prudently introduced, and acquaintances discreetly made, will not only restrain sinners, from wounding our ears with profane or licentious talk, which will at the same time be some diminution of their guilt, but must, if they have any reflection and diffidence, excite in them strong suspicions, which through God's blessing may improve into full persuasions, that the doctrines and the precepts, which they have slighted, and we reverence, are awful realities. At least it will greatly comfort all, who are engaged in the same cause with us; contribute much to preserve the wavering, and singularly animate the well-disposed, but timorous and distrustful of their own judgments; to find, from the open and joint professions of good persons, that more such are left, than they imagined. The wretches, who *go about seeking whom they may devour* †, endeavour to persuade them, that there are few or none. Let us shew them the contrary; and where they are to be met with; and that they are sufficiently united, as well as numerous, to be a shelter and a refuge: convince them, that if, by adhering to their duty, they lose the good opinion, such as it is, of some, they shall gain the much more valuable esteem of others: offer them our support and friendship, our advice and assistance. We are apt to be extremely zealous in patronizing the several parties, that we form about other affairs, often excessively trifling ones: in securing persons to our side, in guarding them against contrary impressions. And can it be right, can it possibly consist with true

* Psal. cxix. 115. † 1 Peter v. 8.

piety, that we should have no zeal, or next to none, for the greatest of all concerns; for the honour of our heavenly Father, our blessed Redeemer, our gracious Sanctifier, for the present and future felicity of mankind?

But further: even to the most zealous, free and friendly discourse with their well-wishers and fellow-labourers may be of singular benefit by procuring them advice, how to conduct and moderate their zeal: which else may prompt them, and young minds especially, to overleap the bounds of discretion; to make attempts without likelihood of success, give advantages to adversaries, and bring shame on their own heads: the consciousness of which perhaps may drive them, from their first extreme, to the opposite and much worse. Here then particularly, but in many other cases too, they *who fear the Lord* may, by mutual communication, help each other to preserve at once *the harmlessness of the dove, and the wisdom of the serpent* *.

It is not by any means necessary to these valuable ends, that the whole conversation of religious persons, when they are together, be on the subject of religion. The bare choice of such company and acquaintance is, of itself, a mutual incitement to persevere and be active. Their discourse on every subject will be regulated by the laws of religion: the truth and importance of it will be supposed in all they say; and on occasion will be asserted, and shewn more directly. When it is proper, they will congratulate one another on the happy state, to which they have attained through Him, *who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world* †: they will animate one another to *go on their way rejoic-*

* Matth. x. 16. † Gal. i. 4.

ing * they will *comfort one another* †, with Christian considerations, under difficulties and afflictions. The introduction indeed of pious phrases, or even sentiments, out of time and place, will be avoided, as improper and disgusting, instead of serviceable. But still, while we converse together so freely on every thing besides, we need not surely be so extremely shy, as we commonly are, on the head of religion. It is true, the name of it should not be profaned, any more than that of its Author, by irreverent vulgar use: but to exclude and banish it under colour of respect, can never be fitting. It is a sadly false delicacy, if we behave thus from reverence to it: and a lamentable mean-spiritedness, if we forbear to mention it from fear or shame. One would not be unseasonable or superfluous in professions of loyalty, of friendship, of any thing: but one would not be defective neither, and bring one's self into suspicion, and one's friends under discouragements. The same then is the rule concerning piety: and expressing ourselves openly in its favour, whenever opportunity requires or invites, is no more than acting in character. Vicious and impious creatures boldly shew themselves in their characters. *They corrupt others*, as the Psalmist observes, (indeed who can help observing it ?) *and speak of wicked blasphemy: their talking is against the Most High. They stretch forth their mouth unto heaven, and their tongue goeth through the world. Therefore fall the people unto them*, taking their confident assertions for marks of superior knowledge; *and thereout suck they no small advantage* ‡: advantage to their cause at least, but often to their personal interests also; which no men are more given to pursue, by all methods, direct or

* Acts viii. 39. † 1 Thess. iv. 18. ‡ Psal. lxxiii. 8, 9, 10.

indirect. And what should keep us, who have an infinitely better cause, and that supported too by public authority, from avowing it in opposition to them, especially along with those, who will join us in supporting it? Bad people cannot have one motive for their zeal, which we have for ours, and it is the strongest possible: that I mean, which the text mentions,

II. That God observes, and will reward it. *The Lord hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him.*

He hears indeed every thing, and can forget nothing. But the prophet means, that he takes a gracious notice, of this particularly, amongst other good actions of his servants: and will as certainly recompense, in the present life, if it suit the other purposes of Infinite Wisdom, but however in the next, their consultations and declarations for the promotion of his honour, as if they were all registered in a book, that lay continually open before him*. The world is apt to pay no attention, or a very short-lived one, to the usefulest labours of the best Christians. Many are condemned by their example, and occasionally too thwarted by their behaviour: nay, some perhaps envy their present comfort of mind, and prospect of future happiness. Therefore they speak of them with severity or scorn, bear hard upon them, try to set others against them: while, towards people of known bad principles and morals, they are all indulgence and charity. Mutual conference and counsel amongst serious persons will considerably help them to support such treatment. Yet still their situation would often be a disconsolate and melancholy one, were their only resource in themselves and this life. But

* Psalm lvi. 8.

the reflection, that they act under the eye of God, shall be directed and owned by Him: the right, which they have, of saying to their own hearts, and to each other, what our Saviour said to his disciples, whom *he sent forth as sheep amongst wolves* *, *Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom* †; this alters the view of things totally. Unpromising as present appearances are, *the kingdoms of this world shall be the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ* ‡, both in profession and practice, far more fully than any one of them hath been yet: and how great must be the honour and the joy of having contributed to this blessed change! We indeed shall probably never see it here: but we shall look down upon it with rapture from above. And while we remain below, how reviving is the assurance, *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,* cultivate faithful obedience to him, in your own breasts, in as many more as you can: *and all other things shall be added unto you* §: such proportions of every worldly advantage, as will prove really beneficial! And be they more or less, they will be enjoyed with singular satisfaction, as gifts of his love. But more especially such may hope to escape better than others in times of general visitation and punishment; as himself intimates in the verse after the text. *They shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in the day, when I make up my jewels:* or, as it rather should be translated, *they shall be jewels;* or, *a peculiar treasure to me,* preserved with uncommon care, *in the day that I make,* or, *appoint: and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son, that serveth him.*

Persons may indeed, by concealing to which side

* Matth x. 16. Luke x. 3. † Luke xii. 32.
‡ Rev. xi. 15. § Matth. vi. 33. Luke xii. 31.

they belong, escape some little persecution, and secure some little interests; and entitle themselves to some favourable distinctions from the worthless, of which last many seem extremely ambitious. But while the Disposer of all things *gives them their desire* in these respects, *he sends leanness withal into their souls* *. Either they pine away with secret consciousness, that they act a mean part; and feel their sense of duty grow languid for want of exerting it: or if they decline without perceiving the decay, their state is the more dangerous and hopeless. Acknowledgment of God is as necessary to our acceptance, as faith in him. For St. Paul hath told us, that as *with the heart man believeth unto righteousness*, so *with the mouth confession is made unto salvation* †. And St. John hath ranked together in future punishment, *the fearful* with the *unbelieving* ‡. Nay, our Saviour's own declaration, which cannot be too often brought to mind, is: *Whoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels* §.

Our religion then is not to be dissembled, but avowed. *He that is not* openly *with Christ, is against him* ‖: disobeys his directions, and frustrates, as far as he can, a valuable part of his design. But they, who assist his followers to support his cause, though wicked or thoughtless *men revile them* for it, are expressly assured, that *great is their reward in heaven* ¶: always provided, that the rest of their character and conduct be suitable to this part. For Scripture promises, made to one duty, must ever be understood on supposition of its being performed from such principles,

* Ps. cvi. 15. † Rom. x. 10. ‡ Rev. xxi. 8. § Mark viii. 38.
‖ Matt. xii. 30. Luke xi. 23. ¶ Matt. v. 11, 12. Luke vi. 22, 23.

as will effectually influence us to observe every duty. And then, the more we abound in this particularly, the ampler will be our recompense.

Now therefore I proceed,

III. To apply what hath been said, to the present occasion.

Beneficial as pious discourse and consultation is in general, the benefit may both be increased to ourselves and other serious believers, and extended further amongst the vicious and inconsiderate, by our uniting into regular societies for the more constant intercourse of mutual edification, and support of religious behaviour. In these, the knot of virtuous friendship is drawn closer; each member of them is by the rest warmed into greater earnestness, furnished with fuller advice, bound to stricter circumspection. They are shelters and protections, to which the weak may fly: they are *cities*, though small, *set on a hill*, to attract the observation and direct the steps of travellers: they are *lights* shining in *the world*, to shew men the path of life *. Such indeed principally are the more public *assemblies* of Christians: which true Christians will on no account ever *forsake*; though it be *the manner of some* †, indeed of many in our days, who yet retain the name, to slight them, in direct opposition both to Scripture and reason. But going to church at the appointed times hath been represented as a thing, which people do thoughtlessly and of course, or to avoid censure: whereas voluntary societies, like yours, cannot be under that imputation. Joining in them proceeds plainly from deliberate choice; and proclaims very seasonably in a degenerate age, a sense of duty, which may through God's blessing have excellent effects. Indeed, were

* Matth. v. 14. † Heb. x. 25.

this method recommended no other way, the practice of our adversaries might teach it us. Unbelievers have their infidel clubs: nay, turn into such, as far as they can, every sort of meeting for every other purpose. Thus they strengthen each others' hands in impiety: and surely then we should associate to *build up* each other *in our holy faith* *. Not that you are to condemn those, who do not in form become members of your societies. They may have reasons, with which you are unacquainted: they may do what is equivalent in some other way; they may judge ill in this particular, and yet mean and act well in the main. But still joining more visibly and professedly in the work of the Lord, as you do, may be of singular service to yourselves and others.

Nor can it be doubted, but these societies, in the many years which they have subsisted, have preserved and reclaimed from sin, improved and ripened in goodness, great multitudes of souls: a praise infinitely superior to all that any other combinations can claim, which are instituted for worldly pleasure or profit; and, without much caution, may divert the attention to wrong matters, to fix it on such as are comparatively trifles; whereas your's points it directly to the *one thing needful* †. Long practice and trial hath taught you, what regulations are most proper to avoid inconveniences; and attain the excellent ends, which you propose. Indeed the printed orders of one of your assemblies, which I take it for granted the rest have in substance, are so perfectly right and wise, that you need but little more direction, than often to read them carefully over, and keep up to the spirit of them.

Merely paying a personal attendance at your so-

* Jude, ver. 20. † Luke x. 42.

cieties, and joining with it a decent deportment in common life, though it may be an example of some spiritual use to others, will be of little more than worldly benefit to yourselves: indeed will deceive you fatally, if you rest in it. For a bare outside profession is nothing, is hypocrisy. Nay, though you practise from an inward principle of conscience ever so many human virtues, but without regard to God, you are only moral, not pious men. Nay further, if you also worship and honour Him, and think that by this you merit favour and reward from him, you are miserably ignorant of his holiness, and your own sinful imperfections. Or even should you go yet another step, and trust, not in your good works, but in his mercy, as discoverable by the light of reason only: that can never shew you certainly, whether, and in what degree, his mercy will extend to you; and though *not far from the kingdom of God**, you still want one thing before you can enter into it, faith in his mercy, as purchased by the blood, and offered by the Gospel, of Jesus Christ. Numbers, alas! in our days have wholly, or in part, slighted and cast off his Gospel. But instead of following them, remember the saying of St. Peter, when *many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him; Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life* †. If you once leave the revealed will of God; what you are to do, will often be matter of doubt: but how you shall be able to do it, and what you are to hope or to fear, after doing so little rightly, and so much amiss, will be always uncertain. And in these circumstances, worldly interest, or sensuality, or vanity, will soon

* Mark xii. 34. † John vi. 66, 67, 68.

tempt you, as too frequent experience hath proved, first to live wickedly, then to disbelieve a future recompense. Therefore if you love your souls, if indeed you would preserve any sense of religion at all, stand fast in the faith of your blessed Redeemer. Very possibly you may hear not only jests thrown upon it, which deserve nothing more than contempt and abhorrence, but seeming or real difficulties raised in relation to it, and shrewd objections urged against such a doctrine, or such a text, or such a fact. Qualify yourselves to answer them, if you can: for answers to them all there are. But if you cannot; rely securely, as you well may, on the accumulated evidence of innumerable miracles performed and prophecies fulfilled, the sublimity and purity of the doctrine, the incomparable excellence of the character of Christ, the disinterested sufferings of his first followers, the glorious prevalence of his Gospel against all opposition, the divine efficacy of it on the hearts of men. These are general, obvious, irrefragable proofs of the whole of Christianity at once: sufficient to outweigh ten thousand exceptions to particular parts.

Being convinced then, that you ought to receive the Gospel of Christ, receive it in simplicity, *as the truth is in Jesus* *. Believe in him, as *God manifest in the flesh* †, believe in the atonement of his death, the necessity of the grace of his Spirit, the efficacy of his institutions: and that with such a faith, as will equally prompt you to pray for pardon and help, and to *cleanse yourselves*, by means of the assistance granted you, *from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God* ‡.

From this faith will arise comfortable hope, which

* Eph. iv. 21. † 1 Tim. iii. 16. ‡ 2 Cor. vii. 1.

differs only in degree from joyful assurance, of being in a state of acceptance and salvation. But the Scripture hath not taught us, nor is it safe, to judge of our spiritual condition by any such delightful feeling, instantaneously impressed upon us: for the presumptuous sinner may work himself into the imagination of it, and the modest and humble saint experience it much less strongly. But the rule is, to *know* ourselves, as well as others, *by our fruits* *. If our *faith work by love* †, love of God, love of our neighbour, love of goodness and of heaven, all is well. In these therefore exercise yourselves *to make your calling and election sure*, and your societies respectable: *for if you do these things, ye shall never fall* ‡.

Each of you then be careful separately to *adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things* §. *Abstain*, not only *from* all evil, but *all appearance of evil* ‖, lest *the name of God be blasphemed through you among the Gentiles* ¶. *Be not conformed to this world* ** in any thing sinful, ensnaring, suspicious; for such many of the customs of this world are. Avoid unbecoming levities in discourse; indulgence to the full, or delicacy, in meats and drinks; vain shew and expence in apparel, amusements of bad report or bad example: form your families, as well as yourselves, to *seek and set their affections, not on things on the earth, but things above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God* ††. Yet at the same time recommend your seriousness by as easy and cheerful a deportment as you can; be *gentle* ‡‡, *be courteous* §§, excuse yourselves with civility from what you cannot approve; censure no liberties, that are innocent; and with moderation

* Matth. vii. 16, &c. † Gal. v. 6. ‡ 2 Pet. i. 10.
§ Tit. ii. 10. ‖ 1 Thess. v. 22. ¶ Rom. ii. 24.
** Rom. xii. 2. †† Col. iii. 1, 2. ‡‡ Tit. iii. 2. §§ 1 Pet. iii. 8.

join gracefully, if possible, in all harmless things, to which propriety invites you. In your dealings and business, be just, sincere, equitable, compassionate: for it is a dreadful prejudice against the Gospel, when they, who distinguish themselves in the profession of it, are thought unfair, indirect, unreasonable, hard-hearted. Be also diligent in your vocations, frugal, prudent: for these also are Christian duties: and if, for want of observing them, you fail to thrive tolerably well in the world, all will be imputed to your expence of time, and thought, and money, on your religious meetings and schemes. Besides, you ought both to *labour* and be saving, *that you may have to give to him that needeth**. Infidels are apt to boast of their charity and good-nature: and it concerns us highly not to let them be superior to us in any branch of our Saviour's *new commandment*, universal *love* †: but exercise even towards them, who seldom fail to treat us and our holy faith despitefully and contemptuously, as far as they can, all the humanity, candour, and friendliness, that is consistent with being *undefiled and separate from sinners* ‡. Much more be mild towards professed Christians, who seem either on the one hand too rigid, or on the other defective, in faith or practice. Guard yourselves against both extremes: warn them, if properly called to it: but otherwise leave them *to their own Master, to stand or fall* §. Even should any of them be so ill-informed or ill-tempered, as to think or speak slightly or harshly of you personally, or of your societies; *instruct them in meekness* ‖, if there be hope of setting them right: if not, bear them in silence, and be content with the testimony of a good conscience.

* Eph. iv. 28. † John xiii. 34. ‡ Heb. vii. 26.
§ Rom. xiv. 4. ‖ 2 Tim. ii. 25.

In proportion as each of you singly observes, or transgresses, these Gospel rules, he will bring honour or shame on himself; on the particular body, to which he belongs; on these assemblies in general. And their influencing their members effectually to eminent goodness, is the best, indeed the only strong argument, that you can use to invite others into them. Therefore take especial care, that you may always be able to use that with truth. For this end, beware in the first place of letting your conferences degenerate into *form without power* *, into lukewarmness and supineness, *a name that you live*, while indeed you *are dead* †: and if there have been any tendency this way, *remember from whence you are fallen* ‡, *be zealous and repent* ‖, and pray God to *revive his work in the midst of the years* §. Beware in the next place of running into controversies and disputes. You have wisely guarded against these, by admitting such persons only as are well affected to our present happy establishment in Church and State. Guard against them still further, by avoiding to debate any unnecessary points of any kind. Never indeed slight what God hath plainly taught, but never insist on what he hath not: about all needless questions, allow different opinions amongst yourselves, without talking of them: neither censure those of others, nor press your own. In matters of practical religion indeed, you not only may, but ought to be earnest. Yet even there, despise not good persons of less fervent dispositions; and heat not one another, or yourselves, into unmeaning or injudicious transports; but let your piety be at once an affectionate and *a reasonable service* ¶. Be mu-

* 2 Tim. iii. 5. † Rev. iii. 1. ‡ Rev. ii. 5.
‖ Rev. iii. 19. § Hab. iii. 2. ¶ Rom. xii. 1.

tually helpful, if you properly, can, even in temporal affairs. For the Apostle hath directed us to do *good, especially unto them that are of the household of faith* *; and therefore surely to those, whom we have the best ground to think worthy members of that household. But your principal concern, beyond all comparison, is to promote your common good in spirituals: to *comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as ye do* †: *if a man be overtaken in a fault, to restore such a one in the spirit of meekness,* each *considering himself, lest he also be tempted* ‡: to *suffer the word of exhortation* ‖, and even of rebuke, with patience, according to that of the Psalmist, *Let the righteous smite me friendly and reprove me* §, and of Solomon, *He that rebuketh a man, shall afterwards find more favour, than he that flattereth with the tongue* ¶. Nay, should any one by his behaviour oblige you to *have no* longer *company with him, that he may be ashamed:* yet the precepts of Christian charity bind you, *not to count him an enemy,* but still, so far as there is any room left *admonish him as a brother* **. But, brethren, though I speak thus *boldly to you, at putting you in mind,* yet I *am persuaded of you that ye are full of goodness, and all knowledge, able to admonish one another* ††, without foreign assistance. And therefore I add only my hearty prayers, *that your love may abound yet, more and more in knowledge and all judgment: that ye may approve things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God* ‡‡.

* Gal. vi. 10. † 1 Thess. v. 11. ‡ Gal. vi. 1.
‖ Heb. xiii. 22. § Ps. cxli. 5. ¶ Prov. xxviii. 23.
** 2 Thess. iii. 14, 15. †† Rom. xv. 14, 15.
‡‡ Phil. i. 9, 10, 11.

SERMON XII.

PREACHED BEFORE THE SOCIETY CORRESPONDING WITH THE INCORPORATED SOCIETY IN DUBLIN, FOR PROMOTING ENGLISH PROTESTANT WORKING-SCHOOLS IN IRELAND, AT THEIR GENERAL MEETING IN THE PARISH-CHURCH OF ST. MARY-LE-BOW, ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 1757.

PROV. IX. 6.

Forsake the foolish, and live: and go in the way of understanding.

THESE are the words of Wisdom herself speaking in person: and to speak them with effect to the poor of our neighbouring island, that *forsaking the follies* of their ancestors, they may *live* as men ought; *and go in the way of understanding*, through the practice of the duties, and enjoyment of the comforts of this world, to the happiness of the next; is the whole intent of the charity, which we are met to promote: the noblest and greatest of the kind, that ever existed.

The kingdom of Ireland is blessed by Providence with all the means of prosperity; and yet the bulk of the people are in a condition very lamentable. With health and strength, they have little or no industry: with capacities like other men, they have little or no knowledge, even of the common arts of life. With

the best situation and opportunities for commerce, they have scarce any of the conveniences which it imports: with a fertile soil, in a temperate climate, they have scarce food and raiment. Under a government, which lays on them the fewest burthens, that perhaps ever nation felt, they are incessantly wishing for a change: and, which is the source of all, though the light of the Reformation shines round them, and the door of Christian freedom is open to them, they continue in thick darkness, voluntary slaves to absurd superstitions. Attached with servile awe to the lowest emissaries of the see of Rome, they imbibe even the dregs of its errors; which many, in other countries of the same communion, have the wisdom to reject. Hence their idolatry is grosser, their esteem of social duties less, their dependence on outward formalities more confident, their enmity to protestants bitterer: and their abhorrence of labour almost insuperable, because it will benefit those, whom they detest.

We ought to pity all the mistakes and sufferings of all our fellow-creatures, and yet more of our fellow-christians, how much soever they proceed from their own faults. Even their temporal evils ought to move us very sensibly: and though penury and nakedness may appear to unaccustomed eyes more grievous than they are; yet the real distresses flowing from them are often extremely heavy. But their spiritual disadvantages, that they have so little acquaintance with rational piety, universal benevolence, the value of moral self-government, and the genuine system of *the truth as it is in Jesus* *, these entitle them to much tenderer compassion, though seldom considered in that view. For our fellow-subjects we ought to feel

* Ephes. iv. 21.

an additional concern, were their interests ever so separable from our own: but in the present case they are united most intimately. While these unhappy creatures remain without proper employment, the country in general must be unhealthy, as well as unpleasant, for want of culture; and thinly peopled, for want of necessaries: the sight of so much wretchedness must be painful; the relief of it expensive, and nevertheless unavailing. That part of the British dominions must be destitute of the wealth and strength which diligence would quickly procure it: and instead of contributing to the support of the whole, must drain and exhaust England for its defence, whenever attacked.

This would be unavoidable, were the natives ever so amicably disposed towards us, ever so dutifully towards our sovereign. But being of a different and persecuting religion; taught by bigoted parents and instructors to regard us as heretics, abhorred of God; and devoted, by his vicegerent on earth, to present, as well as future, destruction: some of them will think doing mischief to us, when they can without hazard, a laudable action; and others will imagine fraud, or perjury, or violence, against such abominable miscreants, offences that claim an easy absolution. These sentiments must greatly affect their conduct in the ordinary intercourses of life: but unspeakably more, when the interests of their church come in question. Accordingly, for these, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, they were rebelling perpetually: in that of King Charles I. they massacred, unprovoked, as many compute, above one hundred thousand persons of our faith: in that of King James II. and the war that followed, not only the meaner sort, but the upper also, gave shocking proofs of the like

inhuman spirit. By such repeated enormities, multitudes of them, on various occasions, forfeited their estates with their lives. These forfeitures, their descendants, whilst they cherish the same way of thinking, must consider as nullities: and wish and hope to regain what they have lost: pining with envy, thirsting for revenge; and imputing their poverty, the fruit originally of their treasons, and since of their idleness, and maintenance of priests without end, to our insupportable oppressions.

Thus uneasy at home, vast numbers of them go abroad, and chiefly into the territories of our enemies or rivals. There some of them exert themselves in trade to our detriment, which they would not do in their own land for our common benefit. Some again, who have got riches already, carry them away to enjoy them elsewhere. But far the greatest part of these emigrants take up the profession of arms in the service of Popish powers; attack us with peculiar fierceness in the day of battle, as we have felt to our cost; and are always ready, when a critical juncture shall appear, to return and head their countrymen against us in another meritorious holy war: which we have the more cause to apprehend, as their bishops are nominated by the Pretender; as neither clergy nor laity amongst them have ever given, or offered to give, though pressed to it by some of their own church, any pledge of their fidelity to the present government; and as those regions of the island, which they occupy the most entirely, are the nearest to the continent *.

* We have been told indeed by a late apologist for them (*b*), that they have, for near 70 years past, that is, ever since they could not help themselves, been perfectly well affected. But we can by

(*b*) The case of the Roman Catholics of Ireland, Dublin, 1755.

We must be allowed therefore to recollect what hath been; and conclude from thence, what will, or

no means trust, against all probability, and the experience of successive ages, to the bare word of a nameless author. And much less can we do it, when a contemporary author, an officer of his own nation and belief, living amongst our enemies, where he may speak out with safety and applause, treats our happy establishment as an usurpation: and frankly declares, that the Irish papists have a settled antipathy to Englishmen, with a strong attachment to France, and the house of Stuart (*c*).

We have also been told by the same apologist and others, that whatever the court of Rome may have done, the church of Rome hath never patronised persecution, or rebellion, or breach of oaths or promises, to introduce or support its doctrine or discipline. But if we must be in danger of these things, whenever the court of Rome or its partisans have power; it is but a sorry consolation to tell us, that the church of Rome hath no hand in them. And yet whence are we to learn the tenets of that church? Not surely from a few obscure, or at best private writers; but from the decrees of her councils, general and particular, the uniform determinations of her Popes, the edicts of her princes (*d*), the received opinions of her divines; the constant practices of her members, whenever an inviting opportunity presents itself; and that practice not once condemned as unlawful, by any pretended authority amongst them; though there have been many and loud calls upon them to condemn it, if indeed they disapprove it. But they have better ways than this: they force the most notorious facts alleged against them, into a neutrality, if not into their service, by misrepresentations; or, if any be intractably stubborn, they pass it over in total silence. Thus particularly this apologist, though he relates a variety of historical occurrences, to shew that his Catholic friends were innocent, or excusable in them all, no more mentions or hints at the horrid butchery of 1641, than if he had never heard of any such thing. And the Irish officer, poor man, hath forgotten it as entirely, in his narration of matters relative to the papists of that island: though he remembers a great deal

(*c*) Lettres d'un Officier Irlandois à un Officier François de ses Amis, Mem. de Trev. Aout, Sept. 1756.

(*d*) See a Discourse concerning the Laws, Ecclesiastical and Civil, made against Heretics. London printed for John Wyatt, 1723.

may be: to put ourselves, when it is requisite, in the condition of our forefathers; adopt their feelings, to excite our vigilance, though not our resentment; and make supplemental provisions for security, where the former have proved insufficient.

How they came to be insufficient, needs not be minutely examined here. Ireland, remote from the rest of Europe, and harassed continually by domestic feuds, was in a state of great ignorance and rudeness at the Reformation. God, *whose judgments are unsearchable* *, raised up then in that country none of the *burning and shining lights* †, which he did elsewhere. Popery therefore, while the attention of England was engaged at home, kept its ground, and soon fortified it by foreign schools and connexions. The first rebellions indeed, which followed on this, principally weakened the authors of them: but the dreadful massacre almost extinguished the protestants. And though the perpetrators of it suffered in their turns very severely: yet the survivors were buoyed up with hopes, in the two next reigns, of recovering all: which they were on the point of accomplishing, when the arrival of our deliverer King William, and their unsuccessful opposition to him, broke their strength, but not their obstinacy. However, since that time, the persons of figure have been gradually coming over: some on right motives; others in consequence of such regulations, as the legislature can justly make in its own defence, and papists can never consistently blame, though wrong

more, than is true, of what preceded, and followed it. Treating persons in this manner, is really holding their understandings in too much contempt; and being almost as void of judgment, as of honesty and shame.

* Rom. xi. 33. † John v. 35.

minds may be tempted by them to hypocrisy. Still, proselytes on suspected inducements, and some of them only from the profession of a false religion to the profession of none, are not likely to have much influence, were they to endeavour it, on their inferiors: who accordingly have adhered to the Romish communion.

And were they never to quit it, their priests, unquestionably, had they uprightness and prudence enough, might give them both better dispositions to industry, and juster notions of Christianity. But there is no prospect that they ever will, in any great measure: or should they do their best, the most refined popery is a dangerous corruption of the Gospel; and hath besides a large mixture of things hurtful to civil society. But especially where a person of the same persuasion keeps up a claim to the crown, its votaries will never be further good subjects, than as their seeming such may procure connivance at their making converts, to which they confess themselves indispensably bound: and should they ever make enow, there would be no peace afterwards, unless we and our king became what they would have us.

Therefore, till the generality of the Irish are brought to be protestants, the English are not safe. And doubtless they might have been brought to it, by gallies and inquisitions, long ago. *But we have not so learned Christ* *. Our adversaries can use every degree of force: yet protest, on occasion, indeed at the very time and place, if it be needful, that they use none; and inveigh against us for sanguinary laws, which they have extorted from us by disloyal practices, and which they know all their invectives cannot provoke us to execute. But *the weapons of our*

* Eph. iv. 20.

warfare are not carnal *, but spiritual: instruction, conviction, exhortation. Now unhappily the persons, whose peculiar office it is to dispense these, are, in all Ireland, scarce eight hundred: a number vastly inferior, not only to that of the popish priests, but to the necessities even of the present protestants. Besides, of these few, a large proportion have no places of abode in or near their parishes. This alone would be a sad discouragement: but a still worse is, that where ignorance hath long obtained almost universal possession, and people are unused to reason, persuading them out of settled habits of religious belief and practice hath difficulties hardly surmountable; and yet less when the application is made to them by persons whom they dislike; but least of all, when hearkening to it for a moment is prohibited under penalty of anathemas, at which they tremble. Attempts have been made: their language hath been learned on purpose: and none would or durst give the preacher a hearing. Possibly some clergymen may have been too much disheartened by such instances. Possibly others, God forgive them, may have been glad to excuse themselves from taking disagreeable pains. And the heads of our church have not an absolute power over their inferiors, to send them on what missions they please, as those of the church of Rome have. How far they have exerted the little, that is left them, I cannot say. But, before either bishops or parochial ministers are vehemently blamed, let the laity reflect, whether they also may not have been negligent in relation to many of these poor creatures, who live under their roofs; and try, what impression they can make on them. If they succeed, I hope it will beget emulation: if not, they

* 2 Cor. x. 4.

will be readier to pardon want of success, or even despair, in others: and conclude, that no method will effectually teach them our religion, but education in it.

Were children taught nothing early, they would know nothing, and be fit for nothing, as long as they lived. But some principles of behaviour they will learn: and therefore should learn the best, which are those of true piety. Their instructors may direct them wrong in that respect, as well as in others: but still they must give them such advice for both worlds, as they think is beneficial; no less than such food, as they think is wholesome. And if one lesson be, what is constantly one of ours, *to prove every thing*, as they become able, *to hold fast that which is good, and abstain from all appearance of evil* *: this is a potent corrective of whatever mistakes may chance to be infused into them. Without this corrective, nay, prohibiting it as poison, the Romanists employ the whole influence of education to the utmost: and therefore cannot reproach us, who employ it with such a restriction. Nor surely can the bitterest enemies to instilling of prejudices, doubt which sort are better. They may wish perhaps, that children should have no faith, but a scorn of it: and they may bring up their own children thus, and take the consequences. But mankind in general must and will have a religion: and multitudes are turned or kept papists, by seeing, that so many pretended protestants have none. Or supposing the project feasible in itself, and otherwise unpunished by Providence: yet morals in private life, and order in public, cannot but decay and be lost, along with the fear of God.

Still, to educate children in our own persuasion against the will of fathers or mothers, would be cruel

* 1 Thess. v. 21, 22.

though legal; unless, by some overt act, they lose, or give up, their claim to educate them; whatever title the state may have to see, that they are bred loyal and useful subjects. And therefore our society takes none away by authority, but those of vagrant beggars. Yet our adversaries, I conceive, would few, if any of them, be so scrupulous as to make that distinction. And certainly not one of them would question, but young persons, committed to their care, might and ought to be instructed in their creed. Nor, I presume, would they inquire very strictly, what induced the parent to delegate to them his right. We induce him, neither by hard usage, nor menaces, nor rewards, nor promises: but only propose to him the benefit of his child. And nature enjoins him to promote even its worldly benefit in every lawful manner. His priests indeed may tell him, this manner is unlawful. But that, and many other assertions of theirs, of which some appear at first sight very strange ones, are flatly contradicted by numbers of persons, as wise, as learned, seemingly as solicitous too about their own eternal happiness. He hath no solid grounds to prefer the opinion of the former to that of the latter. And therefore in this uncertainty, though he may resolve for himself not to change sides, break his old connexions, and make his old friends uneasy: yet why should he not instrust a son or a daughter with those, who will both provide better for their temporal interests, and qualify them to judge better about their religious ones, than he can?

Whatever their reasonings may be, the fact is, that popish parents are willing to send their children to the newly-erected charter-schools: and more are likely to become willing. The reproach of it must

wear off with the novelty: the stories of their bad treatment there have been disproved, as fast as they have been raised: and, I believe, the priests have often found it their wisdom not to overstretch their authority in this case, for fear of weakening it in all. But granting, that these houses cannot be always quite filled with the offspring of papists, which however make in all of them vastly the majority: yet the admission of orphans or vagrants, who else would fall into the hands of papists, hath the same good effect. And were now and then a few, whose parents are known protestants, to be received: no one, who approves either our common charity-schools, or that great charity-school, the Foundling Hospital, could fail to be pleased even with this branch of the management; especially considering, how well the whole is conducted.

The particular rules cannot be specified here: but one there is, of great extent and importance; which would God were observed in this nation; combining instruction with labour. The first part of instruction, to such as need it, is teaching them English: for till they understand that competently, their only inlet of knowledge is from the priests and their followers. They learn also somewhat of writing and arithmetic, which are of use in the lowest occupations: and more of reading; for the good books, which are put into their hands, when they go away, may contribute greatly to fix them in true religion. Of this, the plain doctrines and practical precepts are taught them, with necessary preservatives against popish errors: a proceeding no less prudent, than conscientious. For were they instructed in gainful arts, but the notions of their fathers left to grow up in them, it might cause in time a dangerous

accession to the property of that interest. And were those notions to be rooted out, and no better planted; labour without religion, will generally, as soon as ever it enriches, if not before, give place to idleness, dissoluteness, and all sorts of crimes: whereas diligence from a principle of piety will go on, providing for descendants, for relations, for the poor; and teaching them all to provide, in their turns, for such as belong to them.

But the book-learning of these children takes up only two hours of their day: the rest they spend in work. And so much of the boy's work, as can, is agriculture, for their nourishment and clothing: together with some rudiments of planting and gardening. Thus every school is a little farm; and helps to raise emulation in the most necessary of all business, of which the example and the skill is peculiarly wanting in Ireland. Besides this, both sexes learn those kinds of manufacture, especially the linen, for which there is like to be a demand: and such qualifications, as are requisite for common servants; protestant servants being, on many accounts, highly valuable. The earnings of the scholars, by the things which they make or do for others, are, in most foundations, given to the master or mistress, as part of their salary: an admirable way of securing the children's industry.

If still it be imagined, that they might do more: inquiry and observation will gradually suggest every where the means to that end. But they are put out, as soon as their labour is worth having: for the design is not to get money for the schools by them; but to supply that nation with the quickest succession possible of protestant workmen. If, notwithstanding, the expence of the charity be thought immoderate; it

should be recollected, that the mere building and fitting up so many new fabrics, must be a heavy burthen, which will cease in time. And two or three have been more sumptuous, than needed; but at the charge of the persons, who desired it, not of the society: and care hath been taken of late to obviate all pretence for that complaint. Another consideration is, that the children must be removed to a distance from their parents and their priests: else the latter, at least, would be perpetually tampering with them: and this precaution costs a great deal. They must also be entirely maintained; else they would not be sent. But the food and clothing of each, over and above the produce of their labour, is only about fifty shillings a year: surely a small charge for so excellent a purpose: besides that the whole money laid out, circulates in the neighbourhood.

When their schooling is completed, they are all apprenticed: and, which shews in what esteem they are held, nothing hath been given with them for several years past. As many go out to husbandry, as persons will employ that way: more cannot. None, for some time, have been put to sea: partly because it seems better at present, that they should people their own country with well-disposed inhabitants, than be consumed in voyages; and partly also, because a false rumour, industriously propagated, of their being transported, for slaves, to remote regions, hath raised so wild a suspicion, that they who are transplanted from one part of the island to another, must all be conveyed by land, to disprove it. They are placed only in protestant families: and when they leave them, have a bounty of five pounds from the society, on their marrying protestants: it being generally found, that when either party, especially the wife, is a papist, the other is perverted by

the help of the priest; or however, the children are educated in that persuasion. I wish the laity, men and women, of our communion, were equally assiduous, and equally assisted by their ministers.

It hath been affirmed, that after all the care, said to be taken, most of these children relapse. And at first many did: who yet must not only have been made usefuller in civil society by what they learnt, but, one should think, must also feel some gratitude for the improvements, which they had received; and dislike our religion the less, the more they knew of it. But however that might be, I am assured, on particular inquiry, that now, since the method of transplanting hath been followed, extremely few have become apostates. Indeed why should not habit alone operate as powerfully in our favour, as against us? And why should not young people, thus grounded, see the reasonableness, and feel the amiableness of protestantism, especially when compared with gross Irish popery, so strongly, as to be more like, when grown up, to bring over others, than be brought over by them? Why, in particular, may not their affectionate remonstrances and behaviour, assisted by the tender workings of nature in their behalf, prevail, sooner or later, on their ignorant parents, to *forsake the foolish, and live, and go in the way of understanding?*

Still it hath been said by some, that at best the progress of the design is too slow, to produce any material alteration. And we own, that for some time it was almost imperceptible. Several years must pass, before a single child could be sent from the schools: and several more, before one could act for himself. Nay, since that, we have not advanced so fast, as might be wished: no good design ever doth. Nor indeed is over-great haste advisable. A

new establishment cannot prudently be made any where, till proposals, reasonably advantageous, are offered; and a committee fixed, of trusty and active persons, in the neighbourhood, to superintend it: which, in the midst of papists, where it is most needed, is hardest to be found. However, it is no inconsiderable thing, after all, in so short a space to have had one thousand five hundred children put apprentices, and above one thousand six hundred more now actually instructing. Were only the same number to be kept up, it would augment, without ceasing, the inclination of the balance to our side: and at length the scale must turn. But every year hath brought an increase: and, we may justly hope, will bring a greater. The good consequences of the undertaking will be more evident: these very scholars will, many of them, become masters of families, and take servants from the schools; become rich, and contribute to support, to enlarge, to multiply them. And they, who, by objecting that we make little speed, are one main cause of our making less than we should otherwise, ought by liberal benefactions to compensate for past discouragements, and assist us in proceeding quicker.

No one surely will affect to disapprove, lest he should be obliged to subscribe. No one can be barbarous enough to desire the continuance of poor wretches in error and helplessness, that he may tyrannize over them with impunity. No one can bear so determined an ill-will, either to religion, as to favour the profession of theirs, because it is an absurd one: or to the clergy, as to oppose the forming of these children into rational creatures and good subjects, because they contrived and executed the plan for it; which ought to be deemed, on the contrary,

great amends for any supposed former neglects. No wonder, if the project, before it took place, were treated by many as chimerical: but now, fact hath demonstrated both its practicableness and its utility. Proposals indeed may be offered for amending it in some parts; though the unexperienced ought to offer them with much diffidence: but really, for objections against the whole there is no room left. Both the scheme and the conduct of it have been more universally applauded by the Irish protestants in general, who must be judges of the improvement, to which they are eye-witnesses, than ever any thing of the kind was before in any country. Successive lord-lieutenants have unanimously recommended it to our gracious sovereign: who, with equal generosity and wisdom, prevented the imminent ruin of it in its infancy, eighteen years ago; and hath upheld it ever since, by an annual donation of a thousand pounds, and occasional ones amounting to sixteen thousand more. The parliament of Ireland also, in concurrence with the king, have settled on it the produce of a new tax; valuable in itself, and doubly so as a testimonial of the sentiments of the legislature. Nay, the very papists have acknowledged the efficacy of our schools, by setting up others of their own in competition with them. And so far as they may do any good, we are glad to be the occasion of it: but we must counteract the hurt, which they may do, by a redoubled zeal for what they are aiming to defeat.

Indeed this charity is a public concern of both nations, not only in a religious, but a political view. It relieves present distresses, which always endanger the quiet of a state, more or less; and prevents those of generations to come. In proportion as it spreads,

the country will be more civilized, more cultivated, more populous, more wealthy. These children will stay at home: and not run abroad to settle in popish lands, which hitherto the sameness of belief hath made so agreeable to the inhabitants of that country. By their industry, and the good fruits of it, they will stir up emulation in all of their own rank. By their conviction of the truth of protestantism, they will be satisfied, that the forfeitures of their predecessors, in the last two centuries, for their many rebellions in support of the opposite cause, were deserved. They will be thoroughly disunited from those, whom they have renounced; will love their masters for being of the same faith with them; and stand up for the defence of it, on trying occasions, in word and deed. But further, even the papists of Ireland will have reason given them, by these schools, to think well of their protestant neighbours, and of the clergy in particular. Their priests have suffered them to languish for ages in ignorance, hunger, and nakedness: we bestow on them knowledge and plenty. To them they owe the guilt of their insurrections and massacres, the misery of their attainders and confiscations: to us they will owe the blessing of being humanized and enriched.

Now of all these advantages, Britain must partake. The wealth of that people will not only, in loyal hands, render them a strong barrier to us, but will circulate continually from the extremes to the heart of the empire. Along with that, we shall gain a still more desirable treasure, their good opinion. They will plainly perceive, that we neither hate nor despise them: that if we find it needful to restrain their industry in some things, we excite, aid, and direct it in others; and zealously encourage what evidently conduces to their present, and we are persuaded, to

their future happiness also. Then, as our undertaking succeeds, we shall have those, if wanted, for protestant soldiers in our own troops, who else would be popish ones in the service of our foreign adversaries: and we shall no longer be over-run, as we are, in this metropolis, in its suburbs, in our eastern and our western settlements, with Irish Catholics, as they call themselves, to an amount, which few of us imagine; and at which all of us, if we knew it, would be justly alarmed. Our religion is losing ground on the continent: we have so much more need to be compact, and of one mind, at home. It is losing ground even amongst ourselves: and God give those attention to the danger, who ought to guard us against it. But such care no way interferes with an attempt of making reprisals; and carrying the war, by means of these schools, into our enemies' headquarters. If we conquer them there, we shall have much less cause to be afraid of them here. The supply will be cut off: on the residue of the party like methods will produce like effects. And when once they are produced, the inhabitants of the British isles and colonies will all have the same friends and foes: our fellow-subjects, whose eye is now evil against us, will not only *for their brethren and companions' sake wish us prosperity, but because of the house of the Lord our God will seek to do us good* *. Our civil and ecclesiastical community will, in comparison with their present state, *look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners* †.

What then remains, but that so worthy a design be vigorously executed: that we contribute to it, according to our ability; and move others to contribute, according to our influence? The protestants of Ireland

* Psal. cxxii. 8, 9. † Cant. vi. 10.

are doubtless most immediately concerned to exert themselves. And yet the printed accounts from thence intimate, what else we should be cautious of saying, that all persons there have not been so bountiful as they should. For some years, the main support was from England. And since that, of the Irish subscriptions, those of the bishops make towards one third: and, together with those of the clergy, near one half. Yet the utility is general: and the laity have a much more durable interest in their estates, than the clergy have in theirs; and a larger interest, even in most church-estates, than churchmen themselves. It is not strange however, if they judged, that these ought to stand foremost in the work: if they saw more difficulties on the spot, than we here could discern at a distance; and were held back, somewhat too long, by doubts of success. Besides, though the stated subscriptions of that country are smaller, than might be expected; they far exceed ours: their presents and legacies have risen to no inconsiderable sum: and many, instead of money, have given lands. The original formation of the scheme too is altogether owing to the Irish: on them also hath lain the care and labour of carrying it into execution: superintending every school, and conducting the whole machine, from the beginning to this day: without which, ever so great liberalities from us would have been thrown away, and sunk entirely.

Therefore, whilst we remind them, that, both in conscience and honour, they should take on themselves a due share of what primarily belongs to them; let us remember how much they have taken: and though we should think it not enough; let us rather try to win upon our brethren by gentle representa-

tions, and engaging examples of beneficence, than reproach any of them unkindly; and yet resemble them in that deficiency, for which we blame them. Their esteem and affection is well worth purchasing at a much dearer rate: for we purchase consequentially strength and quiet to ourselves. We were once in the same state of blindness and bondage, that the poor wretches of that island are: let us express our gratitude to God for freeing us from it, by endeavouring to free them. We have been known to them chiefly hitherto by our victories and just severities: let us now shew them our compassionate bounty; and thus acquaint them with the true genius of protestantism. We have been commonly traduced amongst them, as destitute of religion: let us take this amiable method of confuting the imputation. We are wealthy; they are indigent: let us prove our wealth to them in the most reputable, the most useful manner. We send much of it continually to nations unrelated, ill-affected to us, for things which do us no good, but harm: let us strike off a few articles yearly from our vanity and luxury; employ the savings to advance genuine piety, loyalty, and industry, in our sister-island: and so benefit ourselves and her at once. We of the clergy ought *in all things to shew ourselves patterns of good works* *: and surely then for the service of religion, of the protestant religion, of a people so nearly allied to us. Amongst our laity also, *unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required* †, on all fitting occasions. And there ought to be in every man, though possessed only of moderate fortunes, *a willing mind according to that he hath* ‡. But however excusable many such may be; they who are sprung

* Tit. ii. 7. † Luke xii. 48. ‡ 2 Cor. viii. 12.

from Ireland, certainly ought to distinguish themselves in forwarding this charity: their relation demands it of them. They, who have estates there, or incomes of any sort arising from thence, should be liberal to it, beyond others, who have no such connexions. For it is natural to be generous peculiarly in the place, from which their capacity of being generous proceeds. And the more their circumstances and stations point out to them to reside in that place; if they do not, the more ample amends they should make it some other way: besides that what is expended there to encourage labour and liberty, will ere long greatly encrease the produce, the rent, the value of each person's lands.

These considerations are laid before you, solely for your cool reflexion in retirement. No advantage will be taken of any sudden impression, which they may possibly make now; or of the willingness to give, or shame to refuse, that might accompany the social meal, which is to follow our present assembly. This is treating you with singular delicacy and respect. Certainly it will not fail of moving you to the proper return, of such voluntary deliberate donations, yearly or occasional, as best evidence a free heart. Where they will be received, is publicly advertised.

But then, whilst we join with our friends of that kingdom in what we can both do, we must rely on them absolutely for what inspectors alone can do. Much praise, we are sensible, they have merited on that account, from the highest to the lowest. We can only exhort them, and we know they will *suffer the word of exhortation to abound more and more**: to re-examine frequently the plan, and see what may

* Heb. xiii. 22. 1 Thess. iv. 1.

be corrected or improved in it; the management, and see what may insensibly have gone wrong, or been relaxed: to hear objections attentively and candidly, both from approvers and disapprovers of the scheme; for amongst the latter may be persons of consequence and of value, though under the dominion of prejudices: to rectify or vindicate things, as the case requires; and *not let their good be evil spoken of**. The choice of masters and mistresses for the schools is a most essential article of their trust. These ought never to be taken from motives of self-interest, importunity, compassion, cheapness; or any other, than a well-grounded persuasion, that they are qualified, by their serious and practical faith in the protestant religion, their skill and diligence, their spirit and temper, to teach the children, committed to them, their duty to God and the king, together with the means of getting an honest livelihood. For neither of these, without the other, will suffice. But as keeping them to work may be more for the private emolument of the master or mistress, than principling them well; and a failure in the former is more easily perceived; there must be a closer watchfulness over the latter. Yet they are not to be taught an uncharitable vehemence against papists, like theirs against us; much less an imagination, that such bitterness is religion enough: but a fervent affection for the doctrines and precepts of primitive Christianity, with a conscientious dread of *making* either *of none effect through the commandments and traditions of men* †. At the same time, whatever indulgence, whatever appearance, may exalt them, either in reality, or but in fancy, beyond their due rank, is to be prohibited most peremptorily. If

* Rom. xiv. 16. † Mark vii. 7. 13. Col. ii. 8.

knowledge of accounts, or even of writing, will tempt them to think they are above the meanest business: they had much better have little or none of it imparted to them. And in all respects they should be brought up so, as will induce them to look upon their subsequent apprenticeship in the light of a preferment.

For preserving the institution in this vigour, it will be extremely material to keep a frequent correspondence, entering into particulars, with the local committee of every school; to compare the management of one with another, diffuse the notice of whatever good economy hath been any where introduced; and recommend it to all, who can properly make trial of it. Once * a prudent and experienced person was sent to visit a considerable part of these foundations: to examine their state, and propose diminution of expences, improvements of their lands, useful regulations of various kinds. Possibly a repetition of this practice, at moderate intervals, with a report to the committee of Dublin of what had appeared on the enquiry, might have more good consequences than can be at present distinctly foreseen.

In putting the children out, it is of the utmost moment, that the persons, who take them, be not only nominal protestants, but real Christians. For indeed they had better turn papists again, than become such profligates, as the examples and common talk, it may be feared, of some families would make them. They had better think wrong in several articles of religion, than scorn the whole: and be ready to do mischief in particular points occasionally, than in all constantly. But one would contrive most stu-

* In the year 1746.

diously to secure them from both: and for that purpose, if possible, not to place them with popish fellow-servants; at least without a mixture of others. And if those who are entrusted with them, would but have the goodness to bestow some peculiar attention on their moral and religious conduct, it might often prevent the loss of all that had been done before; and both they, and the rest of their house, as well as the poor children, would be the better for it.

The priests, we are told, pursue them to the remotest corners of the island, in hopes of recovering them. Surely then we should be as anxious to retain them. But above all, the ministers of their parishes ought to eye them without intermission; inculcate upon them the most earnest cautions not to discredit their education; and engage them in the firmest promises, whenever they are attacked, either in point of doctrines or duties, to apply for help from them immediately. Our adversaries obtain and perpetuate their influence over their people, by having much intercourse with them, by letting themselves down to them. *They are wise in their generation* *. If we hope to be a match for them, we must imitate them. And then, as they act thus partly for their own private ends, and we can do it only out of kindness, we shall so far have the advantage. Not for this reason only, but for many more, ministers ought to reside in their parishes, and *sow spiritual things* where *they reap carnal* †. The legislature ought first to make provision for residence in a sufficient number of places, then to require it. And mere personal abode, with a legal performance of stated offices, ought by no means to be regarded as the substance of parochial duty. It is not a formal

* Luke xvi. 8. † 1 Cor. ix. 11.

and indolent, much less a gay and voluptuous, but a self-denying, condescending, pains-taking clergy, that will do good: who are *instant in season and out of season**: who *knowing the terrors of the Lord, persuade men* † to avoid them; who loving his promises, invite men to partake of them. Now, if the laity would have such pastors as these, they must prefer and recommend such, discountenancing others. And if they would have the labours of these effectual, they must permit them to have a due effect upon themselves. Else our religion will be reproached and blasphemed for their sakes: which, would they observe its rules, we might hope to see honoured and embraced. For it is remarkable, that in those counties of Ireland, where protestants are strictest, papists are fewest.

But then, if whilst we in England say these things to our neighbours over the water, we set them a pattern of doing the contrary; if our laity are profane, if our clergy are supine: we shall exhort them with an ill grace and small success. Therefore let us begin to amend, and there will be some prospect of their following. Or if they begin, let us think it more honour to copy them in what is right, than to lead in what is wrong. And God grant we may both *consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works; and so much the more, as we see the day approaching* ‡: too probably the day of national calamity, unless we avert it by a speedy reformation; but certainly the day of death, and that awful *account*, which *every one shall give of himself to God* §.

* 2 Tim. iv. 2. † 2 Cor. v. 11. ‡ Heb. x. 4. 25.
§ Rom. xiv. 12.

SERMON XIII.

PREACHED AT THE PARISH-CHURCH OF ST. MARY, LAMBETH, NOVEMBER 5, 1758.

JOHN XVI. 2, 3.

They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think, that he doth God service.
And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.

THE various evils of human life are, all of them, just matter of serious and melancholy consideration: but each in its due proportion and degree. Such of them, as flow of necessity from that order of things, which Providence established in consequence of man's original transgression, are undoubtedly very heavy and afflicting: labour, pain, sickness, death; whether befalling us, or our friends. But a great alleviation of them is, that God inflicts them on us, not man; and uses them to serve excellent purposes, of teaching us resignation to himself, and compassion to each other; of weaning us from this world, and exciting in our hearts earnest desires of a better. So that these calamities, being a wholesome, though rough, exercise of our virtue and piety, may be considered, in this view, with comfort enough. But such as proceed from our own mutual injuries, though even these *work together for good to them that love*

God *, are a ground for much deeper concern: for here is guilt, as well as suffering: mankind not only multiplying present torments, very needlessly, one to another, but treasuring up future and eternal ones to themselves: defeating, as far as creatures are able, the gracious designs of the Creator of all; and turning his world into the very contrary of what he intended it should be.

Well might one have hoped, that our natural principles of humanity, at least of religion, would have so far restrained us, that evils of this kind, if they existed at all, should not be frequent, or extreme. But early and general experience hath too fully confuted such imaginations. However, when revelation came in to the aid of reason, giving so much clearer notice of our duty, and stronger motives to it; one should firmly have expected, that the voice of God, speaking expressly from heaven, must have produced a general and a lasting reformation. But, instead of this, a new gloom arises from hence, to make our view still more discouraging. We see revealed religion, as well as natural, professedly scorned by many, and seriously regarded by very few. Yet, though it hath but little influence, were all that influence good, there would still be some joy. But to have the very *light, which is in us, become darkness* †; and what was calculated, beyond all things, to make us good and happy, perverted to make us wicked and miserable, this completes the sorrow.

Yet so it is: *the gold itself is become dim; the most fine gold changed* ‡. The piety of the patriarchal ages degenerated very early into pernicious idolatries, full of rites impure and barbarous. And no sooner almost were the Jews reformed effectually from the

* Rom. viii. 28. † Matth. vi. 23. ‡ Lam. iv. 1.

worship of false gods, than their zeal for the true one became, by degrees, so blind and fierce, that the condition of many of them might seem not to be extremely altered for the better. Towards the heathen, and one another, indeed their bitterness might usually defend itself by the plea of antecedent provocation: but their treatment of Christianity, when it appeared, was void of all excuse. That perfectly benevolent doctrine, recommended to them by every instance of unmixed goodness attending its delivery, if it had not charms enough to attract their love, had surely nothing to excite their hatred. Yet such was the turn of this perverse nation, that even their own Messiah, *the hope of Israel**, contradicting their favourite scheme, of devoutly indulging their lusts, and piously tyrannizing over the rest of the world; they crucified him, and pursued his followers, with that inhuman bigotry, which, in the words of the text, he foretold they would.

Nor did this wicked spirit actuate them alone: but the heathens also, who had borne, for the most part, very patiently, with the infinite variety of one another's gods; who had long borne with the Jewish religion, as opposite to all their own, as could be; yet persecuted the Christians with a most barbarous rage, for three hundred years: till at length, triumphing over cruelty with mere patience and innocence, it gradually became the established belief of the Roman empire.

And then, at least, would a compassionate spectator of the course of this world, tired out with the sins and miseries of it, have surely thought, the time must be come now, to *lift up his head*†, and rejoice in the happy change. For who could possibly ima-

* Acts xxviii. 20. † Luke xxi. 28.

gine, that the professors of so merciful a religion, especially after experiencing so long the evil of persecution themselves, would ever be brought to exercise it on their own brethren? *But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be** ? The wisdom of God foresaw and foretold, what could not but seem to the first disciples very incredible in itself, that, by quick degrees, their successors would bring into the Christian church almost all the corruptions, which they had heard their Master condemn in the Jewish: human additions to the law of God; human *traditions,* that *made it of no effect* †; dishonest zeal to gain proselytes; implacable resentment against all, who differed from them.

Too soon, and too wide, did these offences spread among the professed followers of Christ: and would God any part of them were quite innocent, that ever had the power of being guilty. But unspeakably the deepest root did this evil take in the see of Rome: which begun surprisingly early to verify of itself one part of our Saviour's words, by *putting out of the synagogue,* excommunicating, or at least attempting to excommunicate, without cause, the churches of Asia, in the controversy of Easter: and employed afterwards, at some times the dignity of the imperial seat, at others the reverence of a principal apostolic foundation, to obtain continually fresh accessions of power; till at length a bishop of that see in the seventh century ‡ assumed the title, which his almost immediate predecessor § had declared to be a mark of antichrist; that of the Universal Pastor of Christ's Church. And his successors took effectual care, that it should be fed with such doctrines most diligently, as were most

* Matth. xxvi. 54. † Matth. xv. 6. Mark vii. 13.
‡ Boniface the Third. § Gregory the First.

subservient to their wicked designs. All, who opposed any of their novelties, but especially any new claim of authority, they prosecuted with infinitely greater vehemence, than if guilty of the grossest immoralities: and not only subjected them to the utmost rigour of spiritual censures, but to the heaviest temporal penalties that they could; and, at length, to death itself.

Even over princes, in process of time, was this unwarrantable dominion extended: and having often been exercised in fact, was in the last place openly asserted, as a just right. For the fourth council of Lateran, held in the year 1215, and pretended to be a general, and therefore infallible one, after beginning with a creed, of which transubstantiation, then first established, made a part; proceeds, in the third canon, to decree, "that all deniers of that, or any "other of the [pretended] catholic doctrines, be ex-"communicated, and punished by the secular arm: "that all, who are suspected, unless they clear "themselves within a year, be deemed heretics; and "that all civil powers, of what rank soever, be ad-"monished, and, if need require, compelled by eccle-"siastical censures, to swear, that they will extirpate "all heretics out of their territories: and if any of "them refuses it, that he also be excommunicated; "and if he give not satisfaction within a year, the "Pope shall declare his subjects to be free from their "oath of fidelity, and give his dominions to catho-"lics; who driving heresy out of them, may possess "them without contradiction, and preserve them in "the purity of the faith." These are the words of that canon. Nay further still; the same council gives to all, who, taking upon them the badge of the cross, shall fight against heretics, the same spiritual pri-

vileges and indulgences, as if they fought against infidels. For making war on the latter, merely for the sake of their religion, though a most unchristian employment, they had already, for selfish ends, taught to be meritorious. And having now raised fighting against the former to the same degree of merit, they soon effected the destruction not only of the Albigenses, a very blamable sect, but of the poor Waldenses likewise, much better believers than themselves; thus fulfilling the second part of our Saviour's prediction, *Yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth God service.*

After these beginnings, the instances, that followed, of popish usurpation, treachery, and cruelty, in every nation of Europe, every nation upon earth, in which popery hath got footing, have been so numerous, that the time would fail me even to name them: and therefore I shall confine myself to a general mention of such, as have happened in a country, which, God be thanked, hath felt much less of them, than many others; I mean our own. And this I shall do without bitterness, far from exaggerating any one fact, or dwelling with the least pleasure on things so dishonourable to the Christian profession; and much too mournful to be remembered, if it were safe to forget them.

No sooner* had King Henry the Eighth been declared, what he undoubtedly was, the supreme head of the clergy as well as laity, in his own kingdom; but, though he had meddled with no one point of the Romish doctrine besides; nay, was so far from

* The following facts are chiefly taken from Foulis's History of Romish Treasons, fol. 1673, a Discourse concerning the Original of the Powder Plot, 4to. 1674, and a book entitled, *The Gunpowder Treason*, republished, with a preface, by Bishop Barlow, 8vo. 1679.

being a protestant, that all his life long he burnt others for being so; yet Pope Paul the Third pronounced him, by a bull, to have forfeited his crown, required all his subjects to revolt from him; and all Christian kings to make war upon him. And in fact this produced some dangerous insurrections, both in his reign, and that of his son Edward the Sixth; under whom no papist was put to death on account of religion, excepting such as rebelled on account of it. How destructive to protestants the short reign of his sister Queen Mary was, notwithstanding their raising her to the throne, and notwithstanding her solemn promises to them, we all know. Yet, in the first ten years of her successor Queen Elizabeth, not one papist, not one of the persecutors, suffered; but all enjoyed quietly the private exercise of their own worship. Indeed almost all of them conformed publicly to the established church; till, in her eleventh year, Pope Pius the Fifth forbade it; and finding his secret designs ineffectual, commanded, by a bull, the whole nation to rebel against her; and denounced a curse against all, that should obey her: which order of his a daring traitor published in the city of London; and receiving for it the reward which he deserved, is the first martyr, of whom the Romanists have to boast in her reign: for a real martyr they account him. And the famous Thuanus, a French historian of their own communion, having called this man's deed a rash action; even so gentle a censure was ordered by the court of Rome to be struck out of his book.

Immediately after this, they began to separate from the church, and rebel against the state: and though very unsuccessful, yet held themselves bound by the Pope's anathema to rebel on; till his successor, Gregory the Thirteenth, pitying the dangers, to

which they had exposed themselves, for ten years together, gave them at length a permission in form to be quiet; provided it were no longer, than till the above-mentioned bull could be openly executed. In the meanwhile, another method was taken, of private attempts to murder the Queen. Many such there were; and almost all of them encouraged by the confessors of the wretches, who engaged in them: particularly by those of that new-invented order, which hath profanely distinguished, by the name of the meek and holy Jesus, the most bloody and faithless combination of men, whom the sun ever beheld; among whose fundamental constitutions it is, that whatever their superior commands, they shall always think lawful; and renouncing blindly their own judgment, receive the word, that comes out of his mouth, as that of Christ himself. This is that society, which one of themselves, Father Campian, in a letter to Queen Elizabeth's council, declares, have entered into a covenant, to destroy, by all methods they can, all heretic princes; in which, he says, they will persist, so long as one of them remains in being. And this man also, being executed here for treason, is reputed by his brethren a martyr.

No wonder, if in such a state of things, at length severe laws were made. None such had been made in the first twelve years of the Queen's reign: nor was it capital for priests to be in England, till the twenty-seventh: when the better sort, even of themselves, acknowledged the treasons of the rest to have deserved it. After this, fresh attempts followed; the Spanish invasion, and the Irish rebellion, both excited and blessed by the Pope: besides endeavours to raise insurrections here; in which Garnet, the superior of the English Jesuits, was deeply concerned: to whom,

as himself owned, orders were sent by the Pope, forbidding all catholics to admit any person for king, on the Queen's death, however near in blood, unless he would swear to promote their cause to the utmost of his power. But failing of success, he procured a pardon from King James for all his past treasons, and then immediately proceeded to commit new ones.

For in the first year of that monarch's reign was the execrable design of this day formed, though accidents deferred its execution. He, in the mean time, permitted no severity against papists, excepting two priests who suffered for a treasonable plot; spoke favourably of them to his parliament, honoured several of them with access to his person, with knighthood; with regards, that made some of his protestant subjects jealous. Yet did not all this hinder the conspirators from pursuing steadily the most shocking design, that ever entered into the heart of man. A small scruple indeed some of them had; that a few of their own communion must have died with the rest. But this was soon removed by their confessors; and the holy sacrament made the bond of so horrid an impiety. Measures were concerted for an insurrection at home, for an invasion from abroad to support it: prayers offered up, both here and at Rome, for the success of their enterprise: which a good Providence discovered, but a few hours before it was to have been executed. Then they broke out into a desperate attempt of an open rebellion, in which some of them perished; some, that were taken, gloried in their design to the last: others indeed condemned themselves: and a great part of their communion condemn them now, as is the usual fate of unsuccessful treasons. Yet

Garnet, who was executed for it, and owned himself privy to it, passes amongst them for a saint and martyr. Tesmond, another Jesuit concerned in it, escaping to Rome, was made penitentiary to the Pope; who himself, as one of the same order affirms, was acquainted with the design, and had proper bulls ready to issue on the success of it.

After this discovery, alarming as it was, the most moderate counsels were taken; and an oath formed to distinguish the better sort of them from the rest; in which they were only to engage, that notwithstanding any bull or dispensation from the Pope, they would bear true faith and allegiance to the king. Many amongst them took this; but immediately what they had done was condemned at Rome: Blackwell, their archpriest here, was deprived of his dignity, for being one of them: and all catholics were commanded absolutely to suffer death, if need were, rather than take the oath.

In the reign of King Charles the First, the same prohibition was repeated: and the Irish massacre of so many thousand protestants, in cold blood, gave a new proof of popish treachery and inhumanity. With a very ill grace did they pretend, after this, to distinguish themselves for good subjects in the two next reigns: when, to pass over the popish plot in the former, the conduct of the latter too fully shewed, at what point all this boasted loyalty was aimed. They had perverted that unhappy prince, King James the Second, to an enthusiastic zeal for their faith, and of consequence for restoring it here. In vain did he take the most solemn oaths to maintain our religion and liberties. He could not prevail on himself to put on the appearance of keeping them, even for a few years: but invaded the whole constitution with such

hasty steps to its ruin, that our fathers beheld popery rushing instantly upon them, armed with all the terrors of arbitrary power; and, besides the ancient instances of its barbarity, they had a dreadful fresh one just before their eyes, in the miserable banishment of their brethren, the French protestants, contrary to all faith, to all pity. But, just when every thing, which they feared, was beginning to fall on them in this nation, and had begun to fall on them in Ireland: then it pleased God to endear to us a second time this day, by the landing of our great deliverer; who succeeded to the throne, left vacant: and from whom is derived to us, we hope, a perpetual security in our present happy establishment.

Moved by this recital of the dreadful evils, which religious intolerance hath committed and attempted; some perhaps may accuse religion itself as hurtful to society. And undoubtedly false notions of it may be detrimental, and sometimes even pernicious. But so may false notions of parental affection, conjugal tenderness, gratitude, every motive to action. Yet this was never thought an argument against the principles themselves. And if any thing be fitted to do good and no harm on earth, true religion certainly is. Natural religion is universally acknowledged to be mild and humane. Christianity indeed some have done their utmost to pervert. But let either the bitterest zealot, or the most bigoted infidel, shew, if they can, one instance, in which the Gospel gives the least pretence for pious cruelty. Every where it breathes mildness, patience, forbearance: enjoins Christians, of ever so different opinions, to receive one another in mutual charity: and even, of those who are no Christians, it permits us not to judge hardly; much less to use them unmercifully. If

then some, who profess this faith, will act in defiance to it, let them bear their condemnation. But to charge their guilt on Christianity, would be like censuring the legal constitution of any government, because they, who rebel against it, behave unjustifiably. For indeed the spirit of persecution is rebellion against Christ, under pretence of a commission from him: it is *the man of sin, sitting as God in the temple of God**. And where it is not designed impiety, it is the grossest ignorance, both of the attributes of our Maker, and the precepts of our Redeemer, as the words of the text expressly declare: *These things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.* And the remedy for this evil is, not casting off the regard, which we owe to God, but establishing just and worthy notions of his service in the minds of men; which, in proportion as they prevail, will banish enthusiasm and superstition from off the earth; whereas, if true religion be once lost, every absurd opinion, as well as mischievous practice, may spring up in its stead. If atheism could take place, it must visibly be the ruin of society. But it cannot. There is an irresistible bent in the human mind to reverence an invisible Power: and if men are not directed to do it in a right manner, they will do it in a wrong. Therefore the certain consequence of abandoning true piety, is becoming a prey to false. And accordingly the emissaries of the church of Rome have never been either more active, or more successful, than since the astonishing increase of profaneness, and indifference to religion, amongst us, have given them so unguarded an opening for the re-establishing their ancient dominion.

Still how unjust soever it may be to think hardly

* 1 Thess. ii. 3, 4.

of Christianity on their account, yet at least these corrupters of it, perhaps we may think, cannot well be abhorred too much, or treated too severely. But God forbid, that we should imitate, however provoked, what we condemn; or charge on every particular papist, what we cannot but charge on popery, in general. Many of them doubtless are well-meaning persons, from whom both the principles, and the practices above-mentioned, are concealed, as much as ever they can, by artful disguises, or bold denials; and who think in their consciences, that nothing should induce them to commit the crimes, of which their forefathers have been accused. Yet notwithstanding, were that authority, in which they profess an implicit faith, to command their assistance in ever so wicked an enterprise, at a critical juncture; on what grounds the most unwilling of them all could refuse, one doth not see. In the meanwhile indeed they may be much better persons, than their religion, did they know the depths of it, would allow them to be. And even amongst the worst of them, great numbers may be entitled to our Saviour's plea for his crucifiers: *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do* *. But such ignorant zeal, though it alleviates their guilt, increases the danger from them; and they must allow communities of a different faith, to defend themselves against that danger most watchfully.

Ours hath done it by penal statutes, terrible in appearance, but extorted by the necessity of the times; and so entirely suspended, as that necessity lessened, that they, who have every where broken through all laws, divine and human, to destroy the protestant religion, without sparing it in a single

* Luke xxiii. 34.

instance, where they could suppress it with safety, have long enjoyed unmolested the exercise of their own, notwithstanding so many legal provisions to the contrary, notwithstanding their numerous attempts against former governments, notwithstanding their general refusal to own and give security to the present. God forbid, that we should envy them this indulgence: God grant, they may learn to imitate our mildness! Of that indeed there is little hope. Yet still let us continue to act, as Christians ought; and add to the public lenity of our superiors, every prudent instance of kind behaviour in private life: never indeed affecting or entering into dangerous intimacies with them, but never giving needless provocations, even to the worst; much less grieving the better-minded, by upbraiding remembrances of past things. Let us in every other respect absolutely forget all that they have done or attempted: only not forget due thankfulness to God, that they have not succeeded hitherto; and due precaution that they may not succeed hereafter: either by open force, or such private arts of increasing the number of their proselytes, as may enable them to use force when they will. For the spirit of that church, though studiously concealed, is still the same. Not one of the vilest actions, done to serve it, have they ever by public authority condemned, liberal as they are of condemnations in other cases: not one of the most extravagant claims, made in favour of it, have they ever disowned. And they cannot disown with common modesty, though they force themselves to do it sometimes, that they hold all promises and oaths to be void, which they make to the prejudice of their religion or church: for it is the ex-

press language of their infallible guides, their popes and their councils. It is very true, their practices of late have not been so enormous, as formerly: the temper of mankind is milder; their influences on the princes of the earth is less; and they have the wisdom not to threaten, while they cannot strike. But remember, our days have known the bloody executions of Thorn and the merciless banishments of Saltzburg; the inquisition of Spain subsists in its full force; the imprisonments, the confiscations, the enslaving, the murdering of our protestant brethren in France, have been revived within these few years, with the bitterest fury, though entirely unprovoked. And if we will trust those, who continue to shew, by such marks, what they are; our folly will deserve every thing, which we can suffer.

Now what have we to secure us from all the errors, and all the cruelties, of this most corrupt tyrannical church? Not one thing, under God, but the support of the government, which we now enjoy; and have seen attacked by a formidable rebellion, in favour of a bigoted member of that communion. How then shall we support, and strengthen effectually, an establishment, so essential to our happiness? By hearty and active loyalty, honest and disinterested public spirit, firm and friendly union: but above all, by serious repentance, and amendment of our ways, with fervent prayers to the great Disposer of all things for his protection. And may it please him to deliver us, in time to come, as, blessed be his name, he hath in time past: not for our righteousness, but for his own mercies' sake: to *break the power of the ungodly and malicious* *; abolish persecution, tyranny, and injus-

* Psalm x. 17.

tice, amongst men; and graciously hasten the promised time, when *the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid:* when *none shall hurt or destroy in all his holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea* *.

* Isaiah xi. 6. 9.

SERMON XIV.

PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. MARY, LAMBETH, OCTOBER 25, 1761.

TITUS iii. 1, 2.

Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates; to be ready to every good work:
To speak evil of no man; to be no brawlers, but gentle; shewing all meekness unto all men.

THIS is the first anniversary of the day, on which we lost, very unexpectedly, a sovereign, under whose just and mild and prudent administration we had lived, in freedom, safety, and plenty, above thirty-three years. The mercy of Providence, unworthy as we are of it, hath filled his place with a most pious and gracious, amiable and respectable prince; who hath hitherto given us cause to hope, from his government, for every thing that we can wish. Our joint thanksgivings have just now, with the greatest reason, been offered up to God for so important a blessing: together with our earnest prayers, which indeed we repeat as often as we assemble here, for his long life and prosperity. But the most acceptable expression of our gratitude will be, to perform, every one of us, diligently the several duties of loyal subjects, that belong to our respective stations. And

these the passage of Scripture, which I have read to you, comprehends so fully, and ranges them in so natural an order, that explaining and enforcing the precepts of it, as they lie there, will give a sufficient view of all that is incumbent on us in this matter.

Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates. These phrases have the same meaning: only the variety of them serves to set forth the obligation the more completely, and press it the more earnestly: as indeed there are few, that deserve a greater regard.

Human kind, from early ages, have lived collected into large numbers: and our nature and circumstances plainly require, that we should. We experience an inward propension to assemble and unite: and are by the faculty of speech peculiarly qualified for it. We have many affections, and the seeds of many virtues, planted in us; which a more solitary life would give us very little room to exercise or cultivate: and many wants and necessities belong to our condition, which nothing can tolerably well supply, but an extensive intercourse of man with man. We cannot therefore either improve or enjoy ourselves, as God designed, but in society: and society cannot subsist, without a due subordination of one part of it to another; that is, without government and obedience. The appetites, the passions, the caprices of men, would be always leading them to disquiet their neighbours, if they were not restrained by authority. And a public direction is further necessary, both for defence against external dangers, and for establishing inward order in the community. For even the best-meant endeavours of each particular for the general benefit, would be almost always ineffectual, and often prejudicial, unless they were conducted by the general wisdom.

Then besides, the civil power is eminently useful, by the sanctions of its laws, to what concerns us yet more nearly, the reformation of our morals, and bettering our tempers. For though rewards and punishments have no immediate efficacy to make a change within: yet regulating our behaviour will of course by degrees contribute to mend our hearts. Human laws indeed cannot extend to all our actions: but to many of the most material they can: putting it out of men's power to do the evil, which else they would, or stopping them short before they are gone far: *saving* some *by fear* *, making others wise by experience, extirpating the incorrigible; and obliging every one to set all around him a pattern of innocent and regular living. But then lastly, as a right belief in God, and his various dispensations towards men, promotes, beyond all things, both the virtue and the happiness of mankind; another chief advantage of good government is, that whereas without it, most men would either through ignorance be destitute of religious principles, or by their own folly, or the fraud of others, led into absurd and pernicious ones: it kindly makes provision for them of a rational method of instruction and worship: not obtruding it on them by force, but proposing and recommending it, which will always suffice: and thus they are guarded, at once, from the dreadful evils both of impiety and superstition; and carefully taught to discharge the duties, and bear the afflictions of human life.

Government therefore being so powerfully conducive to the attainment of these most valuable ends, which doubtless our Maker designed to be attained, the establishment of it in the world ought consequently to be regarded, as a most important law of

* Jude verse 23.

God and nature, directly flowing from the constitution of things. And what reason teaches, revelation expressly confirms: declaring, that the civil power is *the ordinance of God;* and they, who exercise it, *his ministers of good to men*:* from which premises the Apostle's conclusion in the same place is undeniable: *Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake* †. Whoever then refuses due submission to the authority, which Providence hath placed him peaceably under; though we ought to judge of him as charitably as with reason we can, if he pleads conscience for it; is, at least undesigned, guilty of disobeying the appointment of Heaven, in a matter of the utmost consequence to the good of mankind. I do not, by this, enjoin obedience to whatever power may start up, and maintain itself, in times of public confusion, for a while, by the sword: but to such only, as is fully and quietly settled, and acknowledged by the general consent of the community. Our duty becomes such, in this case, only for the sake of our common good. And therefore, not they, who think they ought, and say they would protect us, but they who can and do, are to be owned and obeyed. The nature of the thing, and the frequent vicissitudes of human affairs, require absolutely, that this be the rule; and all the world have ever admitted it, excepting a handful of persons in our own age and country; who undoubtedly deserve both pity and esteem, so far as they go upon principle; but whose notions, were they to spread, would produce inextricable confusion throughout the earth.

And very happily Scripture is as clear in this point, as reason. *There is no power,* saith St. Paul, *but of*

* Rom. xiii. 1, 2. 4. † Rom. xiii. 5.

God: the powers that be, the several governments actually subsisting in each nation, *are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God**. Again, St. Peter directs all Christians to *submit themselves to every ordinance of man,* every human establishment, *for the Lord's sake: for so is the will of God* †. And accordingly they did so from the beginning of the Gospel: and amidst as many usurpations and bad titles, in the Roman empire, as the history of any nation hath ever recorded, followed no other maxim, than that of obeying faithfully the authority, to which the wisdom of Heaven, superintending all things, from time to time subjected them. But when persons have owned a government, not only by receiving and claiming the benefits of it, but by taking solemn oaths to it, and joining in public prayers for its preservation; one or both of which I presume we have all done, these additional ties render disloyalty afterwards, gross perfidy and abandoned profligateness.

We cannot then reasonably doubt, to whom our submission is due: and we can seldom, if ever, doubt, at least in any point that will affect our practice, how far it is to be carried. If our superiors command us to do any thing, which we cannot lawfully, *we ought to obey God rather than men* ‡. But otherwise we are to act as they require us: and if they treat us hardly, or manage the concerns of the nation wrongly, we are to bear it with patience. For consider: the affairs of government are always numerous and difficult: sometimes uncommonly entangled and perplexed. They, who manage them, are liable to the same mistakes, subject to the same passions, and exposed to more temptations, than other men. There-

* Rom. xiii. 1, 2. † 1 Pet. ii. 13. 15. ‡ Acts v. 29.

fore not only miscarriages and ill accidents will happen; but neglects and failures, partialities and grievances, must be expected in the behaviour of public persons, as well as private. And whoever will not sit down contented under some things of this sort, resolves in effect never to be contented at all, and demands a perfection from others, to which he cannot pretend himself. But then further, as there will be always something amiss in political conduct, so there will always, either through ill design or ignorance or inconsiderateness, be fault found with actions that deserve it not; or the blame laid where it should not. And though mismanagements ought certainly to be rectified, when they can by lawful and prudent methods; and they who attempt this are entitled both to candid interpretation, and in cases of moment, to assistance, from others: yet they should examine themselves very strictly, and all who are concerned should examine with care, not only whether they design well, but whether they consider impartially, and judge rightly; whether they use allowable means to attain their imagined good ends; and whether, on the whole, they are not more likely to do harm, than service.

But supposing opposition made with all these precautions, which it seldom is; and yet made ineffectually: if the point be of any great consequence, without question it is very unhappy. Yet still, having recourse to violent measures would bring on so many obvious mischiefs, and for the most part such multitudes of unforeseen ones too, with so much uncertainty of making things better, and so dreadful a chance of making them one way or another worse, that every wise as well as good man, if the case be in any degree tolerable, will much rather choose to

wait for a remedy from the providence of God, than think of applying desperate ones of his own.

There is indeed a possibility, which, but for a peculiar case which was our own, it would scarce be proper to mention, that government may be so entirely perverted from its original design, by some, who share in it; such exorbitant powers usurped, and so destructive an use made of them, that the duty of obedience must give way to that of self-preservation. But this can be only when the necessity is extreme, and the evil insupportable; the danger of it imminent, and by every other way unavoidable; the relief confessedly real, and visibly within reach. Such were the circumstances of our fathers at the Revolution. But persons are not to imagine, that such frequently happen; or that any thing like them happens, as often as they fancy, or even feel, a few inconveniences; but to bear them, were they many and heavy, with a virtuous patience and sacred regard to the public tranquillity. For certainly the government of the cruel and vicious emperor Nero was extremely bad when St. Paul, notwithstanding, enjoined so strongly dutiful obedience to it, as you may read in the thirteenth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. How religiously then, and how cheerfully, ought we to obey those, who have the rule over us! since undeniably the truth is, and long experience ought to extinguish all suspicion to the contrary, that they have not the least design of hurting us in any one respect, but a sincere desire of securing and promoting all our interests, domestic and foreign: that almost all the inconveniences, which we have suffered, and the burdens that we undergo, have arisen from the wickedness or folly of the nations round us, or from our own: that our established reli-

gion is purer, our liberty greater, our property safer, than that of any other people upon earth: that whatever in our condition may want to be rectified and improved, we may do it by peaceful methods, whenever we agree upon it: that we have no one good effect to promise ourselves from disloyal attempts; but a sure prospect, were they to succeed, of every evil of every kind, to ourselves and our posterity.

In the second part of the text, the Apostle proceeds from obedience, the primary duty of subjects as such, to the other, and consequential parts of their behaviour under government. And here his first rule is a very comprehensive one, that they *be ready to every good work:* in general, to fulfil all the obligations of life; in particular, those of their own station. An universal regard to religion and piety, justice and benevolence, sobriety and temperance, is the very ground-work of social happiness. It gives courage and spirit, health and plenty; trust and union at home, respect and honour abroad: it keeps prosperity from being dangerous, and fills adversity with comfort and hope. But then, besides the common ties, which bind all men, the Apostle includes in this precept, what he could not so well mention singly, the particular ties of each man, belonging to his respective situation and employment. It requires therefore, that persons in authority be faithful to their trust, watchful and diligent, upright and disinterested; or to speak in the language of Scripture, *men of truth, fearing God, hating covetousness* *: that persons of quality and fortune acknowledge their subjection to the same laws, human and divine, with their inferiors; and be careful to use the advantageous ground, upon which they stand, chiefly to pour

* Exod. xviii. 21.

down benefits, and shed abroad good influences, on all beneath them: and lastly, that those, who are of lower estate, be content with their condition, yet industrious by honest means to better it; pay respect to their superiors in word and deed, proportionably to their degree, and *render to all their dues; fear, to whom fear is due, honour, to whom honour* *. Thus, by a regular subordination and mutual serviceableness, every one will concur to make the weight of government easy to those, who sustain it; and the benefits great to all, that are placed under it. And the blessing of Heaven will not fail to crown the virtuous endeavours of such a people with success.

But though every good work is beneficial to society, and every sinful one detrimental: yet some sins are more directly pernicious, than others: and require a more especial caution to be given against them. Such are the two, which usually go together, calumny and faction. These therefore the Apostle prohibits especially, in the following part of the text: *To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers.*

The original word, in the former of these rules, being that, from which the name of blasphemy is derived, commonly denotes in Scripture, using reproachful language of those, who are peculiarly entitled to respect and reverence: as, in the first place, the great God; and, in a lower sense, persons who bear his authority on earth. Considering therefore, to what point the passage before us relates, we must apprehend this injunction to be directed principally against the wickedness of such, as St. Peter saith *are not afraid*, or, translating literally, *do not tremble, to speak evil of dignities* †: where again the word is, to *blaspheme*. Here then St. Paul must be understood

* Rom. xiii. 7. † 2 Pet. ii. 10.

to command, that we neither allow ourselves, nor encourage others, in disrespectful and injurious expressions concerning our rulers, whether supreme or subordinate: but preserve in our own minds, and those of all men, so far as we can, that honour and regard for them, which is the strongest bond of government, of peace and order. In charity it must be supposed, that few of the many, who violate this precept, do it with ill design. But at best, for persons to entertain and spread notions to the disadvantage of their superiors, which, in the case of an equal to whom they wished well, they would immediately see were groundless, and, it may be, absurd, is a very criminal thoughtlessness; and often produces most unhappy effects. Therefore, when we hear such things said, we should always reflect, how many there are, whom prepossession, or interest, or resentment, may induce to report untruths or uncertainties; how many others do the same thing from mere wantonness of invention, or desire to appear knowing; and indeed, how easily facts, or material circumstances, are, without intention, misrelated or misunderstood. We should call to mind, whether we have not, perhaps more than once before now, been led into a firm belief of many a story, for which we have afterwards been convinced there was never the least foundation; and learn from thence a prudent distrust for the future. Nay further still, before we pass our judgment so freely on the characters of public persons, and the administration of public affairs, we should spend a little time in judging ourselves; and considering well, not only whether we are so impartial and candid as we ought, but whether we have indeed a sufficient capacity, and sufficient information, to determine at all about such matters. Unless we can

be sure of this, about which multitudes, we find, are daily mistaken; we should be very fearful of venturing beyond our depth; or, in Scripture language, *exercising ourselves in great matters, which are too high for us* *; and ought in many cases to go but little further, than our good wishes and prayers: leaving the rest to those that are entrusted with it, and *studying to be quiet, and do our own business* †.

But reproachful discourse, though our superiors be spared in it, is fully mischievous enough, to deserve being included, as doubtless the Apostle designed it should, in his general prohibition of evil-speaking. Private quarrels, arising from this source, have often produced very fatal public dissensions. And were it never to have that ill effect, it would still have many others of the worst kind. The good opinion of those, amongst whom we live, is by nature, and with great reason, extremely dear to us: and robbing us of it, is taking from us one of the chief things, that make life agreeable. Every one feels this in his own case. No injury occasions bitterer uneasiness, or keener resentments; yet none is more frequently done: not only in anger, which however, were it the best grounded in the world, is by no means an excuse for saying just what one will; but in perfect good humour, heedlessly and gaily, and for mere want of something else to say. An offence, committed with so little scruple, is usually retaliated with just as little. And thus the cruellest and most barbarous imputations, sometimes obliquely hinted, at others directly spoken out, make up a great part of the entertainment of conversation. They, who pretend to condemn them, hearken to them, and repeat them notwithstanding; and almost every body goes

* Psalm cxxxi. 2. † 1 Thess. iv. 11.

on, more or less, contributing their share to what they complain of, all the while, most heavily. Now though all the ill things, that we tell others, were true; yet both Christian charity, and common humanity, would forbid the needless publication of them. And one should think private interest too might incline us to set the example of such forbearance: as we ourselves either have, or may have, occasion for gentle treatment in return, and a friendly veil to be drawn over our failings. But if a report of this kind be false; then the raising it, and in proportion the carrying it on, is doing a most heinous injury to an innocent person; which may spread we know not how far, and last we know not how long, and do him we know not what harm; without our being able, were we willing afterwards, to restore to him, at all completely, the good name that we have taken from him: which yet we must heartily endeavour to do, whatever shame we may bring upon ourselves by it, before we can hope for our Maker's forgiveness.

The second prohibition of the Apostle is levelled against the vehement spirit of party and faction: *to be no brawlers,* not contentious. Doubtless there may be differences of opinion and conduct, about national concerns, of such importance, that every one ought to interest himself in them, and even zealously. But then it should be done upon reasonable grounds; and without passion or bitterness. We should imagine nothing to be of greater moment than it really is. We should neither speak nor think worse of the opposite side, than we find, on a cool enquiry, they deserve: we should judge of no man's character, by the hurtful consequences either of his notions or his behaviour; if there be any reason to think, that he doth not see them: we should on no

account violate the laws of truth, justice, and humanity, to distress the most obstinate adversary; or to gain the most favourite and material point. In matters of more indifference, the contest, if there is any, should in all reason be carried on with less warmth: and every one be freely allowed, to follow his own way of thinking, and promote the interest of his own friends without offence. To this equitable temper we should first form our own minds, and then study to introduce it amongst others: making it our business to diminish the subject, and narrow the bounds, of contention; and each labouring to abate the vehemence of his own side, with whom he may hope to have credit. But how small soever his success may be in that, each may at least watch over himself: be on his guard against over-great credulity; resist the temptation of countenancing serviceable falsehoods; avoid as much as possible, whatever may seem an unkind action, and most resolutely abstain from doing an unjust one. For whatever is dishonourable and base, ill-natured or uncharitable, in our opposers, is so in us: neither our passions, nor our interests, nor the common practice of the world, is the proper rule of our behaviour, or will justify it another day before the holy Judge of the whole earth. All these things are extremely plain: every body owns them: yet few or none regard them. Bad persons have their ends to serve by transgressing bounds: very good persons are enticed, or provoked, to go on insensibly much further than they should: and each side is so full of indignation at the faults of the other, that they overlook their own entirely. The consequence of this is, that almost every body applying what is said against the iniquities of party, not at all to reform themselves, but solely to

load their adversaries with imputations, they grow worse by what is intended to make them better: whereas we should learn from the failings of others, whom we are but too like, to examine, whether we are not guilty of some of the same: and readily grant mutual forgiveness to those common errors, which we have all great need to be forgiven by our Maker. Thus we should soon quiet and subdue this evil spirit: which in private life makes men disagreeable and injurious, intemperate and riotous, idle and negligent of their proper business: and whilst it fills their minds with other distinctions, often unmeaning, yet always mischievous; destroys from off the earth, in proportion as it prevails, the most important and necessary of all distinctions, that between good persons and bad. For amongst the zealots on every side, the lowest and the vilest creature, that is useful to their cause, or even but noisy for it, shall meet with high favour: and the worthiest who opposes them, be it ever so fairly and decently, be it in ever so great a trifle, or for ever so strong reasons, shall not only be slighted, but ill treated and abhorred. Then for public affairs: the effect of this unhappy temper on them is, if possible, still worse. The end of society and government is to unite men in promoting their general interest: and the aim of party is to disunite them entirely. The whole study of each faction is to advance their own separate strength, overlooking the public welfare; to prevent the other from doing any thing beneficial or popular, to deceive or force them into measures absurd and pernicious; then to accuse them for the omissions or mistakes, nay the unavoidable inconveniences, of which the accusers themselves have been the cause. Thus they labour unweariedly the ruin one of another: and too frequently, rather

than fail of it, will risk, or even contrive, the ruin of the whole. For this wicked vehemence increases in men by unexpected and astonishing degrees: and the wisest, when they once give way to it, cannot foresee how far it may carry them, amidst such a number of things to provoke, or entice, or entangle them so, that they may come to do at length, what they least thought of, nay, what they most abominated. But though party quarrels produce every where very hurtful consequences; yet, as they have room for rising to the greatest heights, so they are capable of doing the greatest harm, in countries of civil and religious freedom: the happiness of which, though on all other accounts invaluable, is grievously subject to this one alloy; that the bold and active spirit, which naturally accompanies liberty, hurries men on, in various instances, to wild behaviour; and particularly carries public disputes to most immoral and dangerous lengths. Here therefore St. Paul's advice* is of the utmost importance. God be thanked, that we have followed it much better of late than formerly; and God grant, that we never relapse into wrong behaviour on this head again. *Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty: only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

This rule of being mutually serviceable by love, is the same, in effect, with that, which the last words of the text prescribe that we should be *gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.* Our passions frequently prompt us, not only to do the contrary, but even to defend it. And yet one should think it might be easily seen, that a proneness to resent and disoblige,

* Gal. v. 14, 15, 16.

take things amiss, and do things for others to take amiss, whatever ill-natured pleasure there may be in it just at the time, is neither a happy, nor a virtuous disposition; much less one allowed by the Gospel towards *our brethren for whom Christ died**: but that indulging it must gradually sour our tempers, hurt our healths, at least destroy our comfort: besides the ample return for it, that we shall be too likely to meet with from the world; and the dreadful guilt that we incur by it in the sight of God. So that whatever difference of interests there may be in other respects, yet in one point the interest of all men is clearly the same: that gentleness and meekness be exercised, good-nature and obliging behaviour studiously cultivated. This is not only the way to enjoy life, but to act rightly in it. Such a turn of mind will enable us, and no other can, to judge reasonably both of things and persons; to discern how far men's actions and designs are justifiable or otherwise: and what allowance ought to be made, as often surely not a little ought, for early prejudices, warm passions, strong provocations, alluring prospects, easy mistakes, and undesigned neglects. Then further, preserving our own tempers calm is the surest method to compose and win upon others: to open their eyes, to conciliate their esteem; and, which is the great point that we should have in our view, to make all worthy persons on all sides, of whom it may be hoped there are many more than we can sometimes believe, agree with one another in whatever is of importance, and bear with one another in whatever is not. With the utmost reason therefore did the Apostle give this direction in the last place, of *shewing all meekness unto all men*, as finishing the character of a good sub-

* Rom. xiv. 15.

ject, and providing completely for the happiness of a nation: that every one should *follow the things, which make for peace* *; carry himself with humanity, and prudent friendliness, to each of his fellow-subjects, without exception; moderate his justest zeal with equal charity; and copy, in the whole of his conduct, that most beautiful and excellent character of Mordecai, in the last verse of the Book of Esther; that he was *accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed.* God grant us to be every one thus minded; and reward us with his blessings, on ourselves, our king and the whole royal family, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

* Rom. xiv. 19.

EIGHT

CHARGES

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY

OF THE

DIOCESES OF OXFORD AND CANTERBURY:

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES FOR ORDERS;

AND A

LATIN SPEECH

INTENDED TO HAVE BEEN MADE AT THE OPENING OF THE CONVOCATION IN 1761.

PUBLISHED FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS,

BY BEILBY PORTEUS, D.D. AND GEORGE STINTON, D.D.

HIS GRACE'S CHAPLAINS.

THE

CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF OXFORD,

IN

A PRIMARY VISITATION, 1738.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

I AM very sensible, that you cannot meet together on this occasion, without making deep reflections on the loss, which you have suffered, for the public good, by the removal of a pastor, whom the experience of so many years hath taught you to esteem and honour so highly. It is your farther unhappiness, that he is succeeded by a person, very unequal to the care of this conspicuous and important diocese. But your humanity and your piety will, I doubt not, incline you, both to accept and to assist the endeavours of one, who can assure you, with very great truth, that he is earnestly desirous of being as useful to you all, as he can; and seriously concerned for the interests of religion, and of this church. Would to God there were less need of expressing a concern for them, than there is at present!

Men have always complained of their own times: and always with too much reason. But though it is natural to think those evils the greatest, which we feel ourselves; and therefore mistakes are easily made, in comparing one age with another: yet in this we cannot be mistaken, that an open and professed disregard to religion is become, through a variety of unhappy causes, the distinguishing character of the present age; that this evil is grown to a great height in the metropolis of the nation; is daily spreading through every part of it; and, bad in itself as any can be, must of necessity bring in most others after it. Indeed it hath already brought in such dissoluteness and contempt of principle in the higher part of the world, and such profligate intemperance, and fearlessness of committing crimes, in the lower, as must, if this torrent of impiety stop not, become absolutely fatal. And God knows, far from stopping, it receives, through the ill designs of some persons, and the inconsiderateness of others, a continual increase. Christianity is now ridiculed and railed at, with very little reserve: and the teachers of it, without any at all. Indeed with respect to us, the rule, which most of our adversaries appear to have set themselves, is, to be, at all adventures, as bitter as they can: and they follow it, not only beyond truth, but beyond probability: asserting the very worst things of us without foundation, and exaggerating every thing without mercy: imputing the faults, and sometimes imaginary faults, of particular persons to the whole order; and then declaiming against us all promiscuously with such wild vehemence, as, in any case but ours, they themselves would think, in the highest degree, unjust and cruel. Or if sometimes a few exceptions are made, they are usually made only

to divide us amongst ourselves: to deceive one part of us, and throw a greater odium upon the other. Still were these invectives only to affect us personally, dear as our reputations are and ought to be to us, the mischief would be small, in comparison of what it is. But the consequence hath been, as it naturally must, that disregard to us hath greatly increased the disregard to public worship and instruction: that many are grown prejudiced against religion; many more, indifferent about it and unacquainted with it. And the emissaries of the Romish church, taking the members of ours at this unhappy disadvantage, have begun to reap great harvests in the field, which hath been thus prepared for them by the labours of those, who would be thought their most irreconcileable enemies.

Yet, however melancholy the view before us appears, we have no reason to be discouraged: for let us take care of our duty, and God will take care of the event. But we have great reason to think seriously, what our duty on this occasion is; and stir up each other to the performance of it: that wherever the guilt of these things may fall, it must not fall on our heads. *For it must needs be, that offences come: but woe to that man, by whom the offence cometh* *. Our grief for the decay of religion might be attended with much comfort in regard to ourselves, could we but truly say, that no faults or infirmities of ours had ever given advantages against it. But though, God be thanked, we are far from being what our adversaries would represent us; whose reproaches perhaps were never less deserved, than now when they are the most violent: yet, it must be owned, we are not by any means, even the best of us, what we

* Matth. xviii. 7.

ought to be. And the present state of things calls loudly upon us, to correct our mistakes, to supply our deficiencies, and to do all we are able for the honour of God, and the happiness of mankind.

If we can be unconcerned now, we have neither piety nor common prudence in us. And if we are concerned in earnest, we shall be very desirous, both to avoid all wrong methods of shewing it, and to make use of all right ones.

Complaining of our superiors for those evils, which perhaps they cannot prevent; or complaining of them with disrespect, for what we may apprehend they could prevent, would both be undutiful and imprudent conduct: would give our adversaries joy, and do our cause harm. Indeed to beg earnestly of God, that he would direct the hearts of those, who preside over the public welfare; and humbly to represent to them, on all fit occasions, the declining state of religion, the importance and the means of preserving it; these things are unquestionable duties. But then we must always approve ourselves, at the same time, conscientiously loyal both in word and deed; reasonable in our expectations; sincerely grateful for the protection, which we are assured of enjoying; and duly sensible, that every thing of value to us, in this world, depends on the support of that government, under which we now live. We cannot be good men, if we are bad subjects; and we are not wise men, if we permit ourselves to be suspected of it.

A second proper caution is, that to speak unfavourably of liberty, religious or civil, instead of carefully distinguishing both from the many abuses of them, which we daily see; or to encourage any other restraints on either, than public utility makes evidently

needful: can only serve to encrease that jealousy, which, being in former ages grounded too well, hath been most industriously heightened, when there never was so little pretence of ground for it; that the claims of the clergy are hurtful to the rights of mankind. It concerns us greatly to remove so dangerous a prejudice against us, as this: not by renouncing those powers, which the Gospel hath given us; for we are bound to assert them: but by convincing the world, that they are perfectly innocent; and avoiding all appearance of assuming what we have no right to: by shewing our abhorrence of tyranny, especially over the consciences of men; and satisfying them fully, if possible, that, *we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus, the Lord; and ourselves, their servants for his sake**. Then, with respect to the privileges, that we derive from human authority: as, on the one hand, receding from any of them without cause is only inviting fresh encroachments, and giving needless advantages to such as will be sure to lose none: so, on the other, straining them too far is the likeliest way to destroy them all at once: and both our usefulness and our security depend very much on our appearing plainly to desire nothing inconsistent with the common good; to have the truest concern for all reasonable liberty, and to be zealous only against licentiousness and confusion.

Thirdly, If we should be tempted to oppose profaneness, by encouraging the opposite extreme of superstition: this also would be unjustifiable in itself; would have bad effects upon as many as we might mislead; and give great opportunities to all that should see them misled, either of accusing religion, or exposing us, as corrupters of religion. Not that we

* 2 Cor. iv. 5.

are to give up inconsiderately, whatever some persons are pleased to charge with superstition; for there would be no end of concessions at that rate: but only to avoid encouraging any thing, that can be justly charged with it; and then we shall stand upon sure ground. For nothing can be more unjust, than those imputations of it, which our adversaries are so fond of throwing, some upon Christianity itself, others on the doctrine and worship of that church, of which, through God's merciful providence, we have the happiness to be members.

Another very pernicious error would be, if we should think to serve our cause by intemperate warmth in it. Christian zeal indeed is a duty that never was more needful, and never less shewn. But passion will do no good. If expressed against those, who are indifferent about religion, it will turn them into enemies: if against the enemies of religion, it will make them yet more vehement enemies. Besides, the extravagant things, that men say and attempt against us and our profession, are not always designed injuries; but frequently the effects of misrepresentations, and prejudices, that have imperceptibly taken hold on persons, who otherwise mean tolerably well. Now mildness to such as these, is but justice: and to all others, it is prudence. Railing is the province, which our adversaries have chosen: and let us leave it to them. For whatever success they may meet with that way, as indeed they excel in it, we shall meet with none: but only make the spirit of Christianity be misunderstood and ill spoken of, by our own want of it. Therefore, how injuriously soever we may be treated, let us return neither injuries nor harsh treatment for it: nor endeavour to mark out those persons for objects of popular hatred,

who are ever so unwearied in labouring to make us so. Yet, at the same time we must never court irreligious men by wrong compliances; never contribute to increase their power of doing harm; never desert our duty, either for fear of them, or favour from them. But then let us defend both religion and ourselves, with that fairness and decency, as well as courage, which becomes our function; acknowledge ingenuously whatever can be alleged against us with truth, only claiming equitable allowances; and where charges are untrue, yet use mild expostulations, not reproaches; and try to shame our opposers by the reasonableness of what we say, rather than exasperate them by the vehemence of it. They indeed have little cause either to complain or to triumph, if, under such gross provocations as they give, our temper sometimes fails: but we have great cause to do our utmost, that it fail not.

And if undue severity of speech must be forborn towards professed enemies; much more to those, who may, for aught we know, design themselves for friends. Indeed, when it is evident, that men only put on a pretence of wishing well to Christianity, or the teachers of it; and, whilst they affect to charge us with uncharitableness for questioning their sincerity, would despise us for believing them: there we must be allowed to see what plainly appears; and to speak of them, both as adversaries, and unfair ones. Or when doctrines, whatever the intention of propagating them be, are inconsistent either with the whole or any part of our religion: it is no uncharitableness, but our duty, to lay open the falsehood and the danger of them. Nay, supposing only the legal establishment of religion, or some branch of it, be attacked; yet the attempt may both be injurious

enough to us, and detrimental enough to the public, to deserve a vigorous opposition. But to shew passion and bitterness in any of these cases; to take pleasure in making men's mistakes or designs thought worse than they are; to judge harshly of them with respect to another world, or expose them to ill usage in this; to refuse them due allowances for human infirmity, or be more backward to own their merits, than to see their faults: such behaviour, instead of promoting truth, will prejudice the world against it; will give unbelievers dreadful advantages, and for ever prevent that union amongst Christians, which would procure us, above all things, the esteem of men, and the blessing of God.

From these improper methods of supporting religion, let us now proceed to the proper ones. And they will naturally fall under the general heads, of our instructions and our lives.

Giving instruction requires knowledge. And therefore, as a competent degree of it is justly expected of persons, before they enter into holy orders: so, when they enter, the care of making a continual progress in it is solemnly promised by them, and covenanted for with them. What may be a very good beginning, is by no means a sufficient stock to go on with; and even that will lessen, if no pains be taken to increase it. Continued application then is a duty of importance. Persons of lower abilities and attainments are in danger, without it, of being useless and despised; and they, who set out with greater advantages, are bound to endeavour at doing, in proportion, greater services to the church of God. Without exception therefore, all who are engaged in so serious an employment as ours, if they have any regard either to their duty or their character, must take care not to be

more remarkable for their diversions than their studies; nor indolently to trifle their time away, instead of employing it to good purposes. And though most parts of learning will be useful to us, and all parts ornamental; yet we must be sure to remember what we have been solemnly admonished of, that no attention to any thing else, ought ever to draw us away from the pursuit of such knowledge, as is properly theological. For to excel in other things, and be deficient in that, cannot but cast a grievous reflection; either on us, for not studying what we profess; or on our profession, as having little in it worth studying. Our principal business therefore must be, to obtain a thorough acquaintance with the Christian faith: first the grounds, then the doctrines of it. And the previous qualifications for attempting this are, a due knowledge of the rules of right reasoning, and of the moral and religious truths which nature teaches; of the state of the world in its earlier ages, and in that when Christianity first appeared. These preparations being made, the great thing requisite in the next place is a diligent search into holy Scripture. For there it is, that both the authentic system of our belief, and the chief evidence for it, are exhibited to our view. Scripture therefore, above all things, the infidel endeavours to ridicule; the mistaken Christian, to wrest in support of his errors: and if we desire, either to confute them, or to satisfy ourselves; our only way must be, to understand it well. For which end it is quite necessary, that we make the original language, at least of the New Testament, familiar to us: and were that of the Old more commonly studied, the advantages would be very considerable.

In order to see clearly, on what grounds our belief stands; together with the sacred volumes themselves,

the writings of such learned persons, as have proved their authority, and vindicated their accounts of things, must be carefully read; and attentively compared with those objections against them, which have been revived of late, dressed up with so much art, and spread abroad with so much diligence. For in our present circumstances we are always liable to be attacked: and consider, what an unhappy triumph it would afford, should we be found unprovided of a rational defence. It is very true, the general evidence, which we have for our faith, is abundantly sufficient of itself, to overbalance many difficulties concerning it, and ever so many cavils against it. But yet our being unqualified to give more particular answers, where they can be given; as indeed there are few cases, where they cannot; may often prove a great reproach to us, and a great stumbling-block to others.

Next to the grounds of religion, the doctrines of it, especially the more important and disputed ones, ought to be studied, with such diligence and impartiality, as may best discover to us the nature of every opinion, and the force of every argument: that so we may neither load Christianity with what doth not belong to it; nor betray, instead of defending it, by giving up what doth; but faithfully *keep that which is committed to our trust* *, both entire and unmixed. To secure this great end, we must ever adhere strictly to the word of God, fairly interpreted by the help of all such means as Providence hath given us; and carefully avoid, on the one hand, fondness of novelty; and, on the other, over-great reverence of antiquity, especially such as comes short of the earliest. But against the former of these, it is pecu-

* 1 Tim. vi. 20.

liarly needful to caution the rising generation; whom the rashness of youth, and the petulant spirit of the present age, too often hurries into a strange vehemence for any imagination, which they have happened to take up: and prompts them to fly out against established doctrines, without having always the patience even to understand them. Such therefore should be exhorted to learn a proper degree, both of silence and suspence, till cooler thought, and farther inquiry, make them fitter judges of things. But besides those controversies, to which this caution chiefly relates; that between the papists and us deserves at present to be well studied, by such of you, as live in the neighbourhood of any. For seldom have they shewn more zeal or more artifice, than of late, in their attempts of making proselytes. And therefore it is of great consequence, that we provide ourselves against them, with a sufficient knowledge of their real doctrines, their most specious pleas, and the proper answers to them. Another subject, with which we are concerned to be well acquainted, is what relates to the government and worship, discipline and establishment, of our own church. Different parts of our ecclesiastical constitution are frequently censured by different sorts of persons, with very different views: though indeed the most opposite of them have appeared, for some time, unaccountably disposed to unite against us; and believers to join with infidels in using their Christian brethren ill. It may therefore be of great use, to inform ourselves diligently concerning every thing of this nature, which is spoken of to our prejudice; and be always ready to shew the genuine state of the case, with mildness and fairness. But no controversies, however needful, must be suffered to divert our attention from what

is of all things the most needful, the study of practical religion, and of the common duties of life. These are the things, which mankind are most apt to fail in, and most concerned not to fail in: and therefore spending much time upon them, obtaining a thorough insight into them, and having a deep sense of them, is the very foundation of doing good both to others and to our own souls.

A competent provision of knowledge being supposed, the next thing is, communicating it to those who are under our care, in such manner as their circumstances require.

The proofs of religion, both natural and revealed, all men should be taught, and especially at present, in the most intelligent and convincing manner. As for the objections against either; such as it may be supposed they have thought or heard of, should be distinctly answered; but the rest obviated only as occasion offers. For to enter into them farther, would be mis-spending time. Next to the truth of religion, they should have its importance laid before them. The necessity of a moral life most men will own in general terms: only what they are pleased to call so is often a very immoral one, both with respect to their fellow-creatures and the government of themselves. But regard to piety is strangely lost, even amongst persons, that are otherwise tolerably serious. Many have laid aside all appearances of it: and others, who would seem to keep them up, do it with evident marks of indifference and contempt. It should therefore be industriously shewn and inculcated, that an inward sense of love and duty to God, founded on just conceptions of him, and expressing itself in frequent acts of worship, constant obedience and resignation to him, is in truth *the first and great*

commandment *, the principal and most important of moral obligations. But then, besides those instances of piety, which reason requires of us, there are others, founded on relations equally real, and consequently deserving equal regard, enjoined by revelation. The utmost care therefore ought to be used, considering the present disposition of the world, to convince men of what moment the doctrines and duties of the Gospel are. To make reason sufficient for nothing in religion, is to overturn every thing, But to insist on its insufficiency for many most valuable purposes, which revelation is fully sufficient for, and on the necessity of observing whatever God hath thought fit to command, this is doing but common justice, though a very seasonable piece of justice, to the doctrine of our blessed Saviour, and the authority of our Maker.

When once men are brought to understand the value of Christianity, the next thing is, to give them a proportionable solicitude for it: to make them observe how visibly the belief and practice of it decay, and how dreadful the consequences must be, and are: to shew them that religion is not the concern of the clergy merely, but the common concern of all men; the great thing, on which public and private happiness depends in this life, as well as eternal felicity in the next: that therefore, if they have any value for these important interests, they must take the necessary means of securing them: their children, their servants and dependants, must be diligently watched over and instructed; private devotion must be practised, family worship revived, and the service of God in the church regularly and seriously attended upon. For laying aside these things hath almost banished

* Matth. xxii. 38.

religion from amongst us: and nothing, but restoring them, can bring it back. Piety is indeed seated in the heart: but to give it no vent in outward expression, is to stifle and extinguish it. Neglecting the public exercise of religion, is destroying the public regard to it: and teaching men to despise their own form of religion, is enough very often to make them despise it under any form.

Great pains have been taken by our adversaries to give the world an ill opinion of religious instruction: and we must take equal pains to give them a good one of it; by representing to them, both the natural influence it hath, and the divine authority that enjoins it. But after all, the only effectual conviction will be that of experience. And therefore the chief point is, endeavour that men may feel the benefit of our teaching: feel at least, that it is their own fault, not ours, if they do not become the wiser, the better and happier for it. To this end, we must all dwell often and strongly on the great duties, and great failures of duty in common life: first explaining the obligations of religion so as that they may be practised: then insisting on it, that they must: entering into the particulars of each with such plainness, that every one may clearly see his own faults laid before him; yet with such prudence, that no one may so much as imagine himself personally pointed at: and taking the strictest care, that no part of what we say may seem in the least to proceed from our own passions, or our own interests; but all appear evidently to flow from a true concern for the good of those that hear us. Diligent consideration, what our subject and our several characters will bear us out in, must direct us, when to give our judgment with diffidence, when to lay stress upon it: in what cases to *exhort with all*

long-suffering *; in what, to *rebuke with all authority* †. But whichsoever we do, neither our language should be florid, nor our manner theatrical: for these things only raise an useless admiration in weak persons, and produce great contempt in judicious ones. Nor yet on the other hand, should our expressions be mean, or our behaviour lifeless: but both must be suitable to the employment we are upon; both be such as come naturally from the heart of the speaker, and therefore will naturally move that of the hearer.

To this our public teaching it will be a great help, and indeed a valuable part of it, if we perform the several offices of our excellent Liturgy devoutly and properly: neither with an irreverent precipitation, nor a tedious slowness: neither in a flat and languid manner, nor yet with an affected liveliness, or a vehemence ill-placed or over-done: but so as may best express the sense and the importance of what we read, and, by shewing our own attention to it, engage that of all around us.

Besides our general instructions, it is very needful, that we give the youth under our care, in particular, an early knowledge and love of religion, that may abide with them, and stand the trials, to which their riper years will of course be exposed. I hope you are all diligent in that most useful work of catechizing: and have done your utmost to prepare for confirmation, those whom you present to me. And I earnestly recommend it to you, that the good impressions, which may well be supposed to have been made upon their minds at this season, be not suffered to wear off again; but be improved into settled habits of religion and virtue, by still farther exhorta-

* 2 Tim. iv. 2. † Tit. ii. 15.

tions, and leading them, as soon as possible, to the holy communion. But though all the youth deserve our peculiar attention: yet if any of them be educated in charity-schools under our inspection, for these we should think ourselves still more nearly concerned, than for the rest; and, by first taking care, to have them taught whatever is proper, and nothing else, then making known the good management they are under, put an end to those accusations, of their learning idleness and pride, superstition and disloyalty: which may have been, sometimes one of them, sometimes another, in some degree deserved; but have been carried with a wicked industry most shamefully beyond truth, and lessened the credit of this excellent institution, even with many good persons, to the great detriment of Christianity.

Another very useful method of spreading the knowledge of religion, and teaching men a serious regard to it, is by distributing, or procuring to be distributed, such pious books, especially to the poorer sort, as are best suited to their capacities and circumstances. For there is great variety of them to be had: and at so very low prices, that much good may be done this way to considerable numbers at once, in a most acceptable manner, for a trifling expence.

But nothing will contribute more to make our public instructions effectual, than private conversation, directed with prudence to the same end. The better we are known to persons, the greater influence we may hope to have upon them: and the better we know them, the more distinctly we shall see how to make use of that influence to good purposes. By representing proper truths, at fit times, with a modest freedom, we may very much abate the prejudices of men, who have any fairness remaining, both against

religion and ourselves: at least we may prevail on them, for the sake of public order and example, to keep within the bounds of decency; and so prevent their doing harm, if we cannot make them good. Persons, that err in particular points of doctrine, friendly discourse may shew us what led them into their mistakes, and enable us to lead them out again. Such as dissent from our church government and worship, talking amicably with them, and behaving in the same manner towards them, if it doth not immediately bring them over, may however bring them nearer to us, both in judgment and affection. Such as are faulty in their moral conduct, serious and affectionate remonstrances, given in private and kept private, and joined with a tenderness to their characters in public, may often do a great deal towards reforming them; and sooner or later, the seed thus sown may spring up in their hearts, and produce happy fruits. We should not indeed press upon persons, when there is no other prospect than that of provoking them; but we ought to watch all opportunities, whilst there is any hope left; and not only make it our endeavour to convert the mistaken and vicious, but stir up the negligent to serious thought, and the good themselves to more eminent goodness. Especially such persons of rank and influence, as we find well disposed, these we must earnestly excite to appear and give countenance to the cause of religion, ever remembering that awful declaration of our blessed Lord: *Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with his holy angels* *. We must convince them of the

* Mark viii. 38.

urgent necessity there is, for interposing in behalf of piety and virtue: and suggest to them the means for engaging with success in this excellent employment. Yet must we never spend so much of our attention on the higher part of the world, as to give the least suspicion of neglecting the lower: whose number is so much larger, whose dispositions are usually so much more favourable to religion, and whose eternal happiness is of equal importance to them, and ought to be of equal concern to us; but we must prove we are in earnest in our work, by making it our care, as it was our Master's, that *the poor have the Gospel preached to them* *. And one opportunity of preaching it with singular advantage, both to the poor and the rich, is when sickness brings them near to the view of another life. At some times indeed the sick may be incapable of attending to exhortations: at others they may be endangered by them: and at all times great prudence is requisite, to avoid the extremes, of terrifying or indulging them too much. But provided due caution be used in these respects; laying before them what they ought to be, and reminding them to consult their own consciences what they have been, is a most likely method of exciting in them such affections and resolutions at that season of recollection and seriousness, as, through the blessing of Heaven, may produce the happiest effects.

To these excellent offices therefore we must all of us cheerfully apply ourselves, each in such degree as his station requires. If they do require pains, if they do take up time, if they are inconsistent with agreeable amusements, and even interrupt useful studies of other kinds; yet this is the business which we have solemnly chosen, and the vows of God are

* Matt. xi. 5.

upon us: it is the most important and most honourable, it ought to be the most delightful too of all employments: and therefore we have every reason not to seek the means of evading our duty, but of fulfilling it; and each to *take the oversight of the flock of God*, committed to him, *not by constraint, but willingly* *. For if we only just do what we can be punished by our superiors for neglecting, we must neither expect success nor reward.

But then to secure either, the chief thing requisite, is still behind: that our own tempers and lives be such, as we say those of other persons should. For if we, who teach religion, live, or suffer our families to live, with little or no sense of religion, what can we possibly expect, but that men will improve so palpable an advantage against us to the utmost: will argue, that we believe not our own doctrine; and therefore it deserves no belief: or, we practise not our own precepts; and therefore they cannot be practised? Thus we shall increase that infidelity and wickedness, which our business is to oppose. Too much of it will be really owing to us: and the whole will be laid upon us. The enemies of religion will have the best pretence in the world to ruin us: and the friends of it will grow unconcerned for us, and ready to give us up to them. But, were these consequences not to follow, still very bad ones must follow. Men, irreligious or vicious themselves, cannot be hearty in opposing irreligion and vice: they cannot do it with boldness, if they were hearty: and could they be ever so bold, it must sit much too ill upon them, to have any good effect. Wrong-minded persons will be furnished with the most plausible excuse imaginable for disregarding them entirely:

* 1 Peter v. 2.

and the rightest-minded persons that ever were, cannot, if they would, regard them as they ought. This will be the case, even with respect to their public teaching: and as for private admonitions, they will seldom have the face to venture upon them, and never succeed in them: whereas every word, that comes from an exemplary man, hath great weight; and his bare example is most valuable instruction of itself. But, were a bad life not to hinder at all the success of our ministry; yet we must remember, it will absolutely hinder the salvation of our souls: and subject us to that *sorer punishment, of which he may well be thought worthy, who, teaching others, teacheth not himself, but through breaking the law dishonoureth God**.

Nor is it sufficient by any means for us to be guilty of no vice. This is small praise, for one of our order. We are bound to be patterns of the most diligent practice of virtue, and the strictest regard to religion: and we shall never make others zealous for what we ourselves appear indifferent about. It is very true, that peculiarly in our case, the generality of the world both expect and find fault, quite beyond reason: and doubtless they are much to blame in doing so. But then surely we are no less to blame, if, when we know the severity, with which our conduct will be examined, we do not watch over it with equal severity ourselves; and take the only way to be looked on as good men, that is, being such undeniably. And whoever hath a due sense of this obligation, will conscientiously *abstain*, not only *from all evil*, but *all appearance* of it too †. Such a one, for instance, far from ever offending against temperance, will be noted for it: and think the imputation of

* Heb. x. 29. Rom. ii. 21. 23 † 1 Thess. v. 22.

being *mighty to drink wine* * almost as infamous, as that of being overcome by it. Far from being guilty of indecency in his behaviour or discourse, he will keep at a distance from every thing liable to the construction of it. Far from being remarkable for luxury and delicacy in his manner of living or appearing, he will be sure to preserve himself, on all occasions, at least as remote from indulgence, as he is from austerity. And though he will never disgust the persons, with whom he converses, by a gravity affected or ill timed: yet he will be equally careful, never to expose himself, by a lightness of carriage unbecoming his function; nor let any thing be a part of his character, much less a distinguishing part, that can only tend to lower it. For we can never be useful, if we are despised: and we shall be despised, if we will give opportunities for it. Even they who seem well pleased with us will think meanly of us inwardly; and perhaps of the whole order for our sakes.

Yet at the same time, we shall be greatly mistaken, if we aim to avoid contempt by haughtiness; which will only add hatred to it. Our rule therefore must be, to express, in every thing, condescension to the lower part of the world, without being improperly familiar; and respect to the upper, without being servile: recommending ourselves at once to the love and esteem of both by a mild kind of dignity and ingenuous simplicity, kept up through our whole behaviour. Mildness of temper is the duty of every man: but especially required, of us †; and absolutely necessary, both to our preserving regard, and doing service in the world. Therefore, whatever provocations we meet with from those, amongst whom we live, as indeed we often meet with great ones, it

* Isa. v. 22. † Matt. x. 16. 1 Tim. iii. 3. 2 Tim. ii. 24.

neither belongs to our character, nor will be for our interest, to take offence and express resentment; but by prudence and patience to *overcome evil with good**. For we shall often do it this way, and never any other. Instead of being engaged in enmities of our own, it should be our endeavour to compose the differences of other persons: not by intermeddling in their affairs, when we are not called to it; but by laying hold on every fit opportunity given us, for disposing them to a mutual good opinion, where there is room for it; or at least to mutual good-will. Too many occasions indeed for friendly interposition, our unhappy party-disputes furnish us with, had we no other. Entering into these with vehemence, and that injustice which never fails to accompany vehemence, is what all men should avoid: but we, who must caution them against it, should avoid it with uncommon care: should religiously pay that respect to every one, which is their due, especially to our superiors; think well of men's actions and designs, unless we have evident cause to think otherwise; judge with modesty, where perhaps we are not qualified to judge; and whatever our opinion be, preserve our behaviour inoffensive: give the least provocation, that may be, to bad men of any side; and act in such manner, as may gain us, if possible, the united esteem of good men of all sides. For theirs is the friendship, of which we ought to be ambitious. Familiarities with profane and vicious persons, beyond what necessary civility, or a real prospect of reforming them requires, will, whatever we may promise ourselves from their favour or interest, always discredit and weaken us in general; and much oftener prove hurtful, than advantageous, to any of us i

* Rom. xii. 21.

particular. But to cultivate the good opinion of the wise and virtuous, to recommend ourselves to their protection, and, whatever else they may differ about, engage their common zeal in the common cause of religion; this will procure us both security and honour, and every way promote the great design of our profession.

Another point, on which our character will not a little depend, is our being, in a reasonable degree, disinterested. A very large proportion indeed of the clergy have too much cause to endeavour at bettering their circumstances: and it is barbarous treatment, to accuse them for it, instead of pitying them. But over-great solicitude and contrivance for advancing ourselves will always make impressions to our prejudice, let our conditions be ever so low; though deservedly much stronger impressions, in proportion as it is higher. We shall be thought to have no attention, but that, of which we discover too much: and the truth is, *we cannot serve two masters**. Nor will it be sufficient, that we avoid the charge of immoderately desiring more; unless we avoid also that of selfishness, in the management of what we have already: a matter, in which it is very difficult, and yet very important, to give no offence. We are bound, both to those who belong to us, and those who shall come after us, to take a proper care of our legal dues: and preserve them faithfully from the encroachments of such, as tell us very truly, that we ought not to be worldly-minded; but forget, what is equally true, that they themselves ought not to be so. But then the strongest reasons of all kinds oblige us, never to make unjust or litigious claims; never to do any

* Matth. vi. 24.

thing, either hard and rigorous, or mean and sordid: to shew, that we desire always the most easy and amicable method of ending disputes; and whatever method we may be forced to take, never to let any thing force us into the least degree of unfairness, passion, or ill-will; but endeavour, by all instances of friendly behaviour, to win, if possible, upon the person we have to do with; at least to convince every body else, how very far we are from intending wrong to him, or any one.

And nothing will contribute more, to acquit us from the suspicion of being selfish in our dealings with other persons; than approving ourselves charitable to the poor: a virtue which becomes us so extremely, and is so peculiarly expected from us, and will give us so valuable an influence; that we should willingly straiten ourselves in almost any thing besides, that, to the full proportion of our abilities, we may abound in giving alms. And together with this, would we but, each in his station, take the best care we can to see justice done them in that provision, which the law hath intended for them, it would generally prove a much more considerable benefaction, than all that we are able to bestow on them of our own.

To the above-mentioned instances of right conduct we must always add, what will render them very engaging, the occasional kind offices of good neighbourhood; with a decent hospitality also, if our circumstances will permit it: and then, notwithstanding the censures of those, who complain that we are of little use, and endeavour to make us of none; we may surely well hope to do service to God, and be esteemed of men: especially if, together with so ex-

emplary a behaviour towards others, we are friendly and compassionate, candid and equitable, amongst ourselves.

Great injustice, I am satisfied, is done us on this head: and many groundless accusations brought confidently against us, by persons, who neither enquire into facts, nor consider circumstances. But there are few things, in which it concerns us more, to clear ourselves where we are innocent, and to amend ourselves where we are faulty. For so long as we are thought in the world, either insolent to our inferior brethren in general, or void of generosity and pity to such of them as we employ; we must not expect to receive better treatment, than we are understood to give. And if we are believed to be chargeable, beyond other men, with mutual bitterness and vehemence, when any kind of controversy rises amongst us; this too is a character, so very different from that which ought to be ours, that the utmost care should be taken to guard against it. Not that we are obliged, either to speak of or behave to men of bad lives, or bad principles, as if they were good ones, because unhappily they belong to our order. Making no distinction would be on all accounts wrong; and making a proper distinction will be very useful. But then we should never think worse of our brethren, than evidence forces us; never publish our ill opinion, without sufficient reason; nor exceed, when we do publish it, the bounds of moderation: we should be ready to shew them all fitting kindness, even whilst they continue blamable; and receive them back with the most charitable tenderness, when they return to their duty. For there is no manner of need, that

we should give either so much advantage or so much pleasure to the adversaries of religion, as to let them see those, who should be the joint-defenders of it, engaged in domestic wars; and bringing such charges, and raising such prejudices, one against another, that it is hard to say, whether believing or disbelieving our mutual accusations will make the world think worse of us. Our blessed Lord therefore, after reminding his disciples, that *they were the salt of the earth;* were designed, by the purity of their doctrine and example, to keep others from corruption; and after giving them that prophetic warning, that we shall find men zealous to fulfil, that *if the salt have lost its savour, it shall be cast out and trodden under foot*;* resuming the same figure at another time, concludes his exhortation thus, *Have salt in yourselves; and have peace one with another* †.

To these things, brethren, if we have any concern for the interests of religion or our own, we must always industriously attend; but especially in such times, as by no means admit of negligence or mismanagement. Yet vain will our best endeavours be, unless we constantly add to them our fervent prayers, that God would enable and strengthen, both us, and all that serve him in the Gospel of his Son, to perform our duty with faithfulness and success. For *we are not sufficient to think any thing of ourselves: our sufficiency is of God* ‡. What therefore we ought, every one of us, to beg of him at all times, let us all at present jointly address to him for, in the comprehensive and expressive words of our public service.

* Matth v. 13. † Mark ix. 50. ‡ 2 Cor. iii. 5.

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the church is governed and sanctified; receive our supplications and prayers, which we offer before thee for all estates of men in thy holy church; that every member of the same, in his vocation and ministry, may truly and godly serve thee, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen *.

* Second Collect for Good Friday.

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF OXFORD

IN THE YEAR 1741.

REVERENDBRETHREN,

WHEN I had first the pleasure of meeting you, being very much a stranger, I could only lay before you such general admonitions as appeared to be seasonable in this unhappy age of irreligion and libertinism. But having obtained a fuller acquaintance with things, chiefly from your answers to my printed enquiries, which have given me many reasons to esteem and respect you; I shall at present descend into some farther particulars: and considering you, not merely as ministers of the Gospel at large, but as ministers of the several parishes in which you officiate, remind you of some plain directions for your doing it more successfully: which I shall deliver with less diffidence, and you will receive with greater regard, for their being chiefly such as have been often recommended with good effect on such occasions as this.

I begin with one of the lowest in appearance, but not the least important of ecclesiastical employments; catechizing the children under your care.

The catechism consists of the fundamental articles of the Christian faith and practice. Without learning these, we know not so much as what it is we profess to be; and there is great danger that unless persons learn them at first, they will never learn them thoroughly: but only pick up from what they hear or read, unconnected and sometimes ill-grounded notions, that will never unite into a complete or a consistent form of sound doctrine: as I apprehend we have had too much experience. The rubric therefore requires, *that every person learn the Catechism before his Confirmation:* and the 59th canon, that *every incumbent shall examine and instruct the young and ignorant of his parish in it for half an hour or more every Sunday.* Every second Sunday had been appointed before: but that I suppose was judged afterwards insufficient. Not that a strict observation of this rule was probably expected, during the winter season, in the generality of country parishes, or where the children, being few, were more easily taught. But plainly it was intended, that how much time soever was needful to do this work well, should be faithfully employed in it. I thank God, there are very few places in this diocese, and I hope there will soon be none, where catechizing is omitted. But I observe that in many it is practised only during Lent. Now I should apprehend that the summer season would in general be much more convenient both for the minister and the congregation. But at least the space of a few weeks is by no means sufficient to fix the knowledge of their Christian duty so firmly in the minds of young people, but that in the many months

which pass from the end of one Lent to the beginning of another, a great part of it will be to learn again. Therefore whenever this exercise is begun, it should be continued much longer: and whenever the constant repetition of it is left off, it should be occasionally resumed for a Sunday or two, at proper distances of time.

Another defect in some places is, that barely the words of the catechism are taught, without any exposition. Now the very plainest expressions in it will need to be varied into others that are equivalent: else children will too often learn nothing but the sound: and unless this danger, which is a very great one, be guarded against, you will have spent both their pains and your own to but small purpose. Besides, all sciences have their terms, which must be interpreted to beginners: and some of those in the catechism are figurative ones; very prudently used, as they comprehend in a little compass much meaning, and lead to the understanding of the same figures, in Scripture; but undoubtedly used on purpose to be explained: without which they are liable to make either no impression, or a wrong one. And farther still, a system so short as to be learned by heart, must have need, were it ever so clear, to be enlarged on; the proofs of its truth, the connexions and tendency of its doctrines, the use and extent of its precepts, to be shewn: and therefore since the canon with great reason enjoins, not only that you examine, but instruct the children in their catechism, I hope you will think this a very needful part of that instruction. As to the manner of it, that may be different, not only in different places, but in the same at different times. Sometimes a continued discourse of some length may be requisite: as it will lay before the

adult part of your parishioners a methodical summary of Christian doctrine; which they often want very much for themselves, and will thus be enabled to teach something of to their children, after they have heard it together from you.

Sometimes a cursory exposition of the more difficult expressions may deserve the preference. But asking the children questions, relating to each part, and procuring them to learn texts of Scripture confirming each, will be always beneficial. The words of the Catechism itself may be very usefully broken into shorter questions and answers: to which others may be added out of any one of the many good expositions that have been made public. Only you should endeavour as soon and as much as you can to make this a trial and improvement of the understanding, as well as the memory of young people, by asking such things as they should reply to in words of their own; making that easy to them in every possible way. And indeed, if many of your questions were formed to be answered merely by affirming or denying, it would be a very good method; and there is an exposition drawn up in that manner.

I am sensible that some clergymen are unhappily obliged to serve two churches the same afternoon: who may therefore plead, that they have scarce ever time to hear the children repeat their Catechism, much less to explain it to them. And God forbid that any needless addition should ever be made to their burthen. But as I am sure they will be desirous of doing what they are able, in a matter of this importance, so I should hope that in the longer days, at each of their churches alternately, they might hear the Catechism repeated one Sunday, and ex-

pound part of another, or hear only part of it repeated, and expound that, or find some way to prevent the entire omission of so necessary a duty. And if these can do any thing of this kind, there is no doubt but others may easily do more.

But a farther hindrance which I fear you complain of too justly is, that parents and masters are negligent in sending their children and servants; and the latter especially are both unwilling and often ashamed to come. Now the canon doth indeed make provision for punishing such. But persuading them would be much happier. And surely in so clear a case, well-timed and well-judged arguments, if persisted in, must do a great deal. The example of their equals or their betters, if you have any under your care that are wise enough to set a good one; or however that of your own families, may help very much: and such little rewards of good books, or other encouragements as you can give or procure for them, it may be hoped, will completely prevail with them. At least such as think they are either too old or too considerable to say the Catechism themselves, may be greatly improved by hearing others repeat, and you explain it.

But in some few places it is pleaded, that the children cannot read, and their parents either cannot or will not get them taught, and therefore the foundation for their learning the Catechism is wanting. But surely some person might be found, within a moderate distance from every place, to whom parents might be induced, at least if something were contributed towards it, to send their children to be instructed thus far. Or at the worst, they who cannot read might easily by degrees learn so much of the Catechism by heart: especially as the three main parts

of it are in every Sunday's prayers. The incapacity of reading was almost general at the time of the Reformation: yet even in those days the clergy were able to teach first parents and householders, then by their means children and servants, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments: and afterwards the rest of the Catechism. Now since that gross darkness hath been so far enlightened, it cannot be impracticable to dispel the remains of it.

After due instruction follows Confirmation: an appointment derived down from apostolical practice; and of such acknowledged usefulness, that in the times of confusion, a hundred years ago, when bishops were ejected, some of their adversaries took upon them to perform this part of their function: and within these few years the Church of Geneva hath restored it in the best manner their form of church-government will admit, and added an office for it to their Liturgy. In our own church the ancient esteem of this institution is, generally speaking, so well preserved, that I hope the desire of being confirmed may not a little strengthen that of being instructed, as the only way to it. And yet I must observe, that the numbers from some parishes have been in proportion very small. This may not have arisen from any neglect in the minister: but as it ought to incline me to make the opportunities of confirmation as convenient as I am able; so it ought to incline you, agreeably to the nature of your function, and the express direction of the 61st canon, to use your best endeavours, that your parishioners may gladly take those opportunities. Yet I must entreat you to endeavour at the same time, that none be brought, but those who, to speak in the language of the rubric, *are come to years of discretion*, who have

learned, not the words only, but in a competent degree, the meaning of what was promised for them in baptism; who can say with seriousness and truth (what surely else they ought not to say at all), that *in the presence of God and the congregation they ratify and confirm the same in their own persons:* and who therefore are likely to have useful and lasting impressions made on them by this solemnity. Undoubtedly some arrive at this capacity sooner than others, and therefore I have mentioned the age of fourteen, not with a design of absolutely tying you down to it; but as being, for the most part, full early enough; and that, where you see it requisite, you may, without giving offence yourselves, oppose my order to the indiscreet forwardness of parents; whom however, I hope, it will make easy, to assure them, as I give you authority, that so long as it pleases God to continue my health and strength, confirmations shall be frequent in every part of this diocese. I must also desire that you will carefully instruct those whom you do bring, in the whole nature of the institution, and particularly in this, amongst other more important points, that they are never to be confirmed any more than baptized a second time: that you will direct them to make the proper answers audibly through the whole of the office, which many of them seem to have no notion of, though it is so necessary in the nature of the thing, and tends so much both to fix their attention, and to give the solemnity a decent and edifying appearance. You will caution them likewise not to crowd forward and incommode each other, using this argument for one, that the whole number who come in at the same time, will be dismissed at the same time also: and lastly, you will press it strongly upon their minds,

that what they promise at their confirmation, they are to remember and keep to their lives' end. I have already desired of you, on these occasions, a list of such as you judge qualified; that so the numbers and persons may be known: of this you would do well to keep a copy yourselves, and if it were written alphabetically, both you and I should be able to consult it upon the spot more easily. For the above-mentioned canon, the 61st, plainly directs your attendance along with your parishoners; to take especial care (for so the words run) *that none be presented but such as you know are fit.* And as your being present to approve or disapprove must needs increase your influence and authority amongst your people; it must likewise make the discharge of my duty so very much easier and more useful, that I beg you will never let me be without your assistance in this work, as you shall never be without mine in any thing. And for this purpose when confirmations are on a Sunday, which is the time I shall usually pitch upon, for the convenience of the people, excepting at the places of my visitation, you may omit for that day the Morning or the Evening Prayers as you see occasion. I have not indeed hitherto been able to effect, what would greatly shorten your labour, calling up your several parishes in their order separately. But I shall be very glad to do it, as soon as ever you can introduce this order amongst them, which I earnestly recommend to you: and I hope a continued frequency of confirmations will soon make that feasible without difficulty here, which is now practised constantly in the populous cities of London and Westminster.

From confirmation persons ought to be led on, if possible, before the impressions of it are much weakened, to the holy Sacrament: and it is one material

reason why confirmation should not be too early, that with a little farther instruction given soon after it, you may easily bring them, such as they ought to be, to the Lord's table: which may prove a much harder matter, when once they have been a good while out of your hands. The small proportion of communicants which I find there is in most of your congregations, and very small in some, must undoubtedly (as this ordinance is appointed for all Christians, and for a standing means of grace to all) be a subject of very great concern to you. And though it is too true, that the generality of the world, and perhaps the lower sort beyond others, are incredibly obstinate in their prejudices, especially in such as at all favour corrupt nature: yet our complaining of these prejudices is not enough; but labouring to overcome them is our business, and we are not to grow weary of it. Some imagine that the sacrament belongs only to persons of advanced years, or great leisure, or high attainments in religion, and is a very dangerous thing for common persons to venture upon. Some again disregard it stupidly, because others, they say, who do receive, are never the better for it; or because their friends before them, or their neighbours about them, never received at all, or not till such an age: and why should they? You will therefore represent to them, that whoever receives without benefit, it is his own fault; and that how many soever omit it either for part of their lives or the whole, not their example but the word of God is the rule for Christians: that far from being a terrible or ensnaring institution, it is in reality a most gracious one: designed to be celebrated with humility indeed, but with comfort and joy: that all the preparation it requires is within the reach of the plainest head and the most

laborious hand, provided there be only an honest and pious heart: and that the judgment which unworthy receivers eat and drink to themselves, needs no more affright those whom God in his mercy will consider as worthy; as he certainly will every true penitent; than the capital punishments, threatened by the law to crimes, make innocent persons uneasy: that he whose life unfits him for the sacrament, is unfit for the kingdom of heaven also; and he, who being qualified for it, neglects it, neglects a dying command of his Lord and Saviour, intended for the greatest good to him. But your public instructions on this head will be much more effectual for being followed by seasonable private applications: in which you will hear and answer their objections, be they of ever so little weight, with great meekness; not be provoked by any perverseness of theirs to shew anger, but only a friendly concern; and even if you meet with an absolute repulse, leave them with an assurance that you shall apply to them again, in hopes that God will have disposed them better to obey his precepts.

But besides increasing the number of your communicants, it were very desirable, that they who do communicate should do it more frequently. In the three first centuries the eucharist was every where celebrated weekly, and in many places almost daily. Decay of piety occasioned an injunction in the sixth, that every Christian should receive thrice in the year; which was reduced in the thirteenth, perhaps with a bad intention, to once. Our church requires thrice *at the least:* which evidently implies that more than thrice is hoped for. And indeed each person will scarce be able to communicate so often unless the communion be administered oftener. But besides, it

is appointed to be every Lord's day in cathedral and collegiate churches, and part of the office for it is read every Lord's day in every church, for an admonition of what it were to be wished the people could be brought to. This indeed at best must be a work of time: but one thing might be done at present in all your parishes, as God be thanked it is in most of them: a sacrament might easily be interposed in that long interval between Whitsuntide and Christmas: and the usual season for it, about the Feast of St. Michael, (when your people having gathered in the fruits of the earth have some rest from their labours, and must surely feel some gratitude to the Giver of all good) is a very proper time. And if afterwards you can advance from a quarterly communion to a monthly one, I make no doubt but you will.

Upon this subject I must observe to you farther, that though in one or two parishes of this diocese the old custom is retained, of oblations for the minister, as well as alms for the poor, to both which the sentences appointed to be read are plainly adapted: yet in many parishes there is no offertory at all: though it be certainly a practice of primitive antiquity, a most proper admonition and specimen of charity; which I fear the generality of Christians much want to be reminded of; a most seasonable demonstration of our loving our brethren for His sake, who hath loved us; and a thing expressly enjoined in the rubric of the Communion Office. Why therefore should you not attempt to revive it, where it hath been intermitted? Merely presenting to persons an opportunity of giving, if they think fit, and only what they think fit, can surely (if the reasons of it be explained to them beforehand) never keep any one away from the sacrament. But then, though all

who have not absolutely nothing, ought undoubtedly to contribute their mite, yet no disagreeable notice should ever be taken of any, for giving but little or not giving at all; and whatever is collected, should be disposed of, so that all persons may know it, with the greatest faithfulness, prudence, and impartiality.

Another part of divine worship, concerning which I think it needful to speak, is psalmody; a part clearly appointed in Scripture, both expressive and productive of devout affections, extremely well fitted to diversify long services, and peculiarly to distinguish the several parts of our own, which were originally separate. Our ecclesiastical laws do not indeed require it under any penalty: because there may not every where be persons qualified to perform it decently. But wherever there are, the rubric makes provision for it, and I recommend to you that it be not omitted. You will always endeavour that your parish-clerks be persons of discretion as well as skill and seriousness. But however you will be much surer of no impropriety happening in this part of the worship, if you either direct them every Sunday to suitable psalms, or assign them a course of such to go orderly through. And unless the generality of your parishioners are provided with books, and able to make use of them; ordering each line to be read, will both secure a greater number of singers, and be very instructive to many who cannot sing. All persons indeed who are by nature qualified, ought to learn, and constantly join to glorify him that made them, in psalms and spiritual songs. This was the practice of the early Christians: it was restored very justly at the Reformation: and hath declined of late, within most of our memories, very unhappily. For the improvements made by a few in church music,

were they real improvements, will seldom equal the harmony of a general chorus; in which any lesser dissonances are quite lost: and it is something inexpressibly elevating, to hear the *voice of a great multitude, as the voice of many waters and of mighty thunders,* to speak in the words of Scripture, *making a joyful noise to the God of their salvation, and singing his praises with understanding.* Persons of a ludicrous turn may represent every thing in a wrong light: but those of any seriousness, if they will lay aside false delicacy, and that preposterous shame of religious performances, with which the present age is so fatally tainted, will find themselves very piously affected only by hearing this melody, much more by bearing a part in it: and therefore I beg you will encourage all your parishioners, especially the youth, to learn psalmody; and excite them, if there be need, with some little reward: for you will thus make the service of God abundantly more agreeable, and their attendance on it more constant. But then, where any knowledge of the old common tunes remains, you should endeavour principally, that your learners may perfect themselves in these; that so they may lead and assist the rest of the congregation, who should always join with them; or if you must admit a mixture of new and uncommon tunes, it should be no greater than you find yourselves in prudence absolutely obliged to. Else the consequence will be, what I fear many of you have experienced, that either one part of your people will resent being unjustly silenced, and this by the introduction of tunes often not so good as their former ones, and so your parish will be divided and uneasy: or if they agree to the change ever so generally, and like it ever so well, yet your select singers will either be weary

in a while of what only novelty recommended to them, or grow conceited and ungovernable, or die off, or be dispersed, and the congregation will be left unable to sing in any manner at all. Where indeed the newer tunes have quite blotted out the memory of the old ones, all you can do is, to make use of what you find in use, to get some of the easiest of them learnt as generally as you can, and keep to these. And if, in order to instruct your people in either way of singing, meetings to practise out of church-time be requisite, you will keep a strict watch over them, that they be managed with all possible decency, and never continued till candle-light, if they consist of both sexes. You will likewise discountenance, at least, all frequent meetings, between the singers of different parishes, and making appointments to sing alternately at one another's churches: for this wandering from their own, which by law they ought to keep to, usually leads them into excesses and follies.

I am very sensible, that some of the things which I have been mentioning, are by no means of equal importance with others. But nothing is without its importance, that relates to divine worship. The mere outward behaviour of those who attend upon it is of such use, and good influence, that I must desire you will be diligent in teaching them (but so as to persuade, not provoke them), what reverence belongs to the house of God: particularly how very wrong it is to sit instead of kneeling when they are or should be addressing themselves to their Maker, and to shew how indecent that appearance is of disregard to him, which they would not use on any account to one of their fellow-creatures a little superior to themselves. If they could only breed up the younger to a right behaviour in this respect, your congregations would

grow regular in time. But mild expostulations will surely, in so plain a case, produce some effect upon the rest also, which will be much facilitated if you take care that proper conveniences for kneeling be provided for them. And if you could convince them also that standing is a more reverent posture to sing psalms to God in, as well as to read them, than sitting, you would come so much the nearer to the Apostolical rule *of doing all things decently*. For as some of the psalms contain the noblest acts of adoration, surely they ought not to be sung in a posture unfit to express it. Another thing, and no small one, which I believe many of your parishioners often want to be admonished of, is to come before the service begins. Undoubtedly allowance is to be made for necessary, especially unforeseen, business, and some allowance for not knowing the time exactly; but I hope you will obviate both these pleas as far as you can, by consulting their convenience in the hour you fix, and then keeping punctually to it. And at the same time you will remind them, that a due degree of zeal in religion would incline them to be rather a great deal too early at the house of God, than a little too late: that no part of the service can be more needful for them, than that which comes first; the confession of their sins: that instruction in their duty is better learnt from the psalms and lessons, which are the word of God, than from sermons, which are only our explanations of it: and that by coming so irregularly, they not only are great losers themselves, but disturb and offend others.

But it is not sufficient to give you directions about such as do come to church, without taking notice of the great numbers which I find there are in many, if not most, of your parishes, that omit coming. Now

on these your preaching indeed can have no immediate influence. But it may however prevent the increase of them; and furnish others with arguments against them: and with the best of arguments, their experience of its good effects. You will therefore questionless do all you can in this way, without using any expressions in relation to their fault, which if repeated to them, may exasperate them. But your chief dependence must be on private application to them, varied suitably to the occasion of their neglect. If it arises merely from ignorance, or sloth, or want of thought, they must be plainly told what they owe to their Maker, and awakened to the hopes and fears of a future life. If it be desire of gain or of pleasure that keeps them away, they must be asked what it will *profit them to gain the whole world, and lose their own souls?* or shewn that to be lovers *of pleasure more than of God* will end in pains eternal. If they defend themselves, by pleading, as some will, that nothing can be told them at church but what they are acquainted with already, it will surely not be hard to shew them that they over-rate their knowledge; that if this were otherwise, they may however be reminded of what they did not think of, or excited to what they did not practise: that, were they too perfect to receive any benefit, it would not be decent for them to tell the world so by their behaviour: that at least they ought to set others an example who may be the better for public instruction: and lastly, that receiving instruction is not the whole of divine service, but praying the chief part. And though it is allowed they can pray at home privately, yet without inquiring whether they do, since God hath commanded, for plain and important reasons, that we worship him publicly, and

hath excepted no one: by what authority doth any one except himself? And what will this end in, but an universal neglect of a duty which our Maker hath required to be universally practised? If it be any scruple about the lawfulness of coming to church that keeps persons away, fit opportunities should be sought with great care, and used with great prudence, to set them right; and such dissenters, for many there are, as do not think our manner of worship sinful, but only prefer another, which perhaps they are often without the means of attending upon, should be seriously entreated to consider, how they can justify separating from a lawful communion appointed by lawful authority, and even omitting all public worship frequently, rather than worship with us. But then with whichsoever of these persons we discourse, not the least personal anger must be shewn: nothing but a concern about their future happiness. For by this means if we make them no better, we shall at least make them no worse, and perhaps may leave in their hearts what will some time or other work there. Persons who profess themselves not to be of our church, if persuasions will not avail, must be let alone. But other absenters, after due patience, must be told in the last place, that unwilling as you are, it will be your duty to present them, unless they reform: and if, when this warning hath been repeated, and full time allowed for it to work, they still persist in their obstinacy, I beg you to do it. For this will tend much to prevent the contagion from spreading, of which there is else great danger: and when once you have got them, though it be against their inclinations, within reach of your pulpit, who knows what good may follow? Different cases may indeed require difference of treatment: and both

the same severity and the same mildness, that will subdue one, will harden another. You will therefore act yourselves, and advise your churchwardens to act in this matter, according to your discretion. And after a prosecution is begun, it shall still depend on your opinion whether it shall be carried on with rigour, or suspended a while in hopes of amendment. Only one caution I would give you. Let not any person's threatenings, that, if he is prosecuted, he will go over to the dissenters, move you in the least. Such will seldom do what they threaten: or if they do, 'tis better they should serve God in any way than none: and much better they should be a disgrace to them than to us. I must not conclude this head without desiring you to remind your people, that our liturgy consists not only of morning but evening prayer also; that the latter is in proportion equally edifying and instructive with the former; and so short, that, generally speaking, there can arise no inconvenience from attending upon it, provided persons are within any tolerable distance from the church: that few of them have business at that time of day; and amusements ought surely never to be preferred on the Lord's day before religion: not to say that there is room for both.

But besides the public service, your people should be admonished to spend a due part of their Sabbath in private exercises of piety. For this is almost the only time, that the far greater part of them have, for meditating on what they have heard at church; for reading the Scripture and other good books; for the serious consideration of their ways; for giving such instruction to their children and families as will make your work both easier and more effectual. And therefore, though one would not by any means make

their day of rest wearisome, or forbid cheerfulness, and even innocent festivity upon it, much less the expressions of neighbourly civility and good-will, which are indeed a valuable part of the gracious ends of the institution: yet employing a reasonable share of it seriously at home as well as at church, and preserving an especial reverence of God even throughout the freer hours of it, is necssary to make it a blessing to them in reality, instead of a season of leisure to ruin themselves, as it proves too often.

But further, besides your and their duty on the Lord's day, it is appointed, that all ministers of parishes read prayers on holidays, on Wednesdays and Fridays: and undoubtedly your endeavours to procure a congregation at such times ought not to be wanting. Were I to repeat to you the strong expressions which my great predecessor Bishop Fell used, in requiring this part of ecclesiastical duty, they would surprise you. But I content myself with saying, that public worship was from the very first ages constantly performed on the two stationary days of each week: that all holidays appointed by the church were carefully observed by the clergy, and the number of them now is not burthensome: that where you can get a competent number to attend at these times, you will act a very pious and useful, as well as regular part: that your own houses will sometimes furnish a small congregation: and what success you may have with others, nothing but trials, repeated from time to time, can inform you. But they, whose parishioners are the fewest and the busiest of all, I hope do not fail of bringing them to church at the least on Good Friday, and Christmas day, besides Sundays. For though in some of your answers to my enquiries, these are not mentioned as prayer

days, yet I presume that this arose from your taking it for granted I should understand they were. But if in any place they be not, I earnestly entreat they may: for at such times there can be no difficulty of getting a congregation. I hope likewise, that you are not wanting in due regard to those which are usually called *state* holidays: and particularly that if the public fast, which hath been appointed these two last years, should be continued (as we have but too much reason to apprehend there will be need), I beg you will endeavour, not only to bring your parishioners to church on that occasion; but move them to such inward humiliation for their own sins, and such fervency of prayer for this most corrupt and wicked nation, as may avert, if it be possible, the just judgments of God which so visibly threaten us.

You must have understood, brethren, in all you have heard, that I am not exhorting you to promote in your parishes a mere form of godliness without the power. Outward observances, by whatever authority appointed, are only valuable in proportion as they proceed from a good heart, and become means of edification and grace. They are always to be reverently regarded, but never rested in: for persons may observe, without the least benefit, what they cannot omit without great sin. The business of your parishioners therefore is, so to use the external part of religion, as to be inwardly improved by it in love to God and their fellow-creatures, and in moral self-government: and your business is to apply both your public and private diligence, that this happy end be effectually attained. You have under your care great numbers of poor creatures, living very laborious lives in this world, and depending almost entirely on you for their hopes of another. It is a noble em-

ployment to direct their behaviour and lighten their toils here, by precepts and motives which lead them on at the same time to happiness hereafter. You will be sure of their acknowledgments at least in proportion as you succeed in this work; but you will be rewarded by God in proportion as you endeavour it. Think not therefore, that I am laying burthens upon you, but only *stirring up your minds by way of remembrance*, and exhorting you so to watch for the souls of men as they *that must give account, that you may do it with joy and not with grief*. It is very little in my power either to increase or lessen your duty. Our blessed Master hath fixed it; you have undertaken it: and were I to release you from ever so great a part of it, I should only bring guilt on myself without acquitting you at all. The injunctions of the New Testament, infinitely stricter than any of men, would continue to bind you as firmly as ever. Take *heed therefore to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you fulfil it.*

Having a subject of such a nature to speak to you upon, and being able to speak to you in a body but once in three years, you must not wonder if I go somewhat beyond the bounds of a common discourse. There are many other things, and very material ones, relating to you as parish ministers, which I could have wished to mention now; but I was willing to treat first of such matters as belong more immediately to the worship of God. If it please him that I live to another visitation I shall in that proceed to the rest. Permit me now to add but one word or two more upon a different subject, and I have done.

Whilst we are serving Christianity here, with the advantage of a legal establishment and maintenance, there are vast multitudes of our fellow-subjects in

America, their negro-slaves, and the neighbouring Indians, amongst whom the knowledge of God is taught, and the exercise of his worship supported, if at all, very imperfectly, and with great difficulty, by the Society for Propagating the Gospel: the income of which depends entirely on the voluntary contributions of good Christians; and is now reduced so low, and burthened with such a debt, that they find it necessary to propose, this next year, according to the powers of their charter, and with his majesty's recommendatory letters, a general collection, which they have not had for above twenty years past, to enable them to go on. Application will probably not be made to every parish separately. But I hope every minister will give this excellent design all the assistance in his power: such, as can afford it, either by becoming stated contributors and members of the society; or at least by some occasional benefaction in this time of need; and all, by recommending the case to such of their people or acquaintance as they have reason to think will pay regard to it. If any person desires a more particular acquaintance with the nature and usefulness and present condition of this undertaking, I have given some account of these matters in a sermon at their anniversary meeting lately published by me, and shall be ready to give any of you farther information, who shall either now or hereafter apply to me for it, personally or by letter.

But I must not yet conclude, without mentioning also the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge: who are carrying on the same good work in the East Indies, which that for Propagating the Gospel is in the West; and at the same time are promoting the cause of religion many ways here at home: par-

ticularly selling at very low rates, Bibles, Common Prayers, and numbers of other religious books, chiefly of small sizes, for the use of the poor. This they also are supported in by voluntary benefactions: to which whoever is able to contribute, will do a very good work: and whoever can only purchase a few of their books for the use of his parishioners, shall have both my best assistance in it, and my hearty thanks for it.

I do not mean at all in speaking of these things to prescribe to you the methods of your charity: but only to lay before you two very deserving ones, which may possibly have escaped the notice of some of you; and to endeavour, that the cause of our Lord and Master may be served in as many ways as it can: for you must be sensible how very great need there is that none be neglected. By zealously making use of such as are presented to us, we may possibly be of much more service to others than we expect: but we shall be sure of doing infinite service to ourselves. And *may God stir up the wills of all his faithful people, that they plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may of him be plenteously rewarded, through Jesus Christ our Lord* *.

* Collect for the 25th Sunday after Trinity.

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF OXFORD,

IN THE YEAR 1747.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

I CANNOT speak to you thus assembled, without congratulating you in the first place on the happy suppression of that unnatural rebellion, which, since we met last, hath threatened our religion and liberties. Nor will either my duty, or my inclination, suffer me to omit returning you my heartiest thanks, for the unanimous zeal you expressed against it; and I doubt not were ready to express, even before the exhortation to do so, which I was directed to send you, and which you received with so obliging a regard. Your behaviour and that of the whole clergy, on this trying occasion, hath abounded with such proofs of loyalty and affection to the government, under which God's mercy hath placed and continued us, that his majesty hath declared, he shall ever have the strongest sense of what you have done for the support of his throne, and gladly shew his gratitude

by any proper methods of extending his royal favour to you and to religion. It may be hoped also, that our fellow-subjects will remember, what they owe to our long despised and reproached labours: and learn, how essential a part the church of England is of our present establishment. Indeed, not only the more candid of those, who thought amiss of us, have acknowledged our merit now; but the *lying lips* are *put to silence, which disdainfully and despitefully* spoke *against us* *. And let us go on, brethren, to express the warmest and most prudent zeal for what we doubly felt the value of, when we feared to lose it: and so behave in this and all respects, that *they who are of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil to say of us* †. For however imperfectly men may do us justice, our reward from God is sure.

I have recommended to you, in the course of my former visitations, various parts of your duty; first in general, as ministers of the Gospel in a vicious and profane age; then more particularly, as incumbents of your respective parishes. Under this latter head, I began with what immediately relates to the worship of God: and now proceed to another point, of a temporal nature indeed as it may seem, but several ways connected with spirituals; the care you are bound to take of the incomes arising from your benefices. These endowments are sacred to the purposes of piety and charity: and it is neither lawful for us to employ them unsuitably ourselves, nor to let any part of them become a prey to the avarice of others. The few that may appear to be larger than was necessary, are in truth but needful encouragements to the breeding up of youth for holy orders. And were they lessened, either an insufficient number would be des-

* Psalm xxxi. 20. † Tit. ii. 8.

tined to that service, or too many of them would be of the lowest rank, unable to bear the expence of acquiring due knowledge, and unlikely to be treated with due regard. Besides, the most plentiful of these revenues may be well applied to religious uses: and therefore, as they have been dedicated, ought to continue appropriated to them. But the generality of them, it will surely be owned, are small enough: and a very great part left so utterly incompetent, by the ravages of former times, that the little which remains, demands our strictest care now. For, without it, poor incumbents will not be able to maintain themselves decently, much less to exercise hospitality and charity towards others. Yet on these things both their spirit and their success in doing their duty greatly depend. And therefore how indifferent soever any of us may have cause to be about our own interests; we ought to consider ourselves as trustees for our successors. We all blame our predecessors, if they have not transmitted the patrimony of the church undiminished into our hands. Let us think then what others hereafter will say of us, and with what reason, if we are guilty of the same fault; and give away for ever, what we should count it sacrilege in any one else to take from us.

Indeed some persons imagine or pretend that the only danger is of the clergy's encroaching on the properties of the laity, not neglecting their own. And we acknowledge there have been times, when that was the danger. But they are long past: and God forbid we should desire to revive them. Placing excessive wealth in the hands of ecclesiastics, would both endanger others and corrupt them: as the examples of past ages have too fully shewn. But the parochial clergy of those times, instead of being

the authors of this error, were the heaviest sufferers by it. And to renew the attempt in these days, would be folly equal to its wickedness: of which we should so certainly and immediately be made sensible, indeed we are so universally sensible of it already, that there can be no need of giving cautions on this head. All we wish for is, the unmolested enjoyment of what clearly belongs to us, and a reasonable allowance of what is confessedly requisite for us, in order to attain the only ends of our institution, the present and future happiness of mankind. In how many and sad instances we fail of possessing in peace such a competent provision, I need not say. Let us all behave under whatever usage we receive, with the innocence and the prudence, which our Master enjoins. But we shall be wanting in both, if we wrong ourselves, and those that will come after us, by improper voluntary diminutions of what is allotted for our support: which, through inconsiderateness and indolence, hath been often done; designedly, I would hope, but seldom. And we may be guilty of it, either at coming into our benefices, or during our incumbency on them, or when we quit them: to which three heads I shall speak in their order.

Yet indeed, as I am now directing my discourse to persons, most of them already possessed of benefices, it may seem too late to give cautions respecting the time of entering upon them. But all who have acted right then, will at least hear with pleasure their conduct approved. If any have acted wrong; which I do not know that any of you have; on being shewn it, they may repent of it, they may consider how far they can undo what they have done, or prevent the bad consequences that are likely to flow from it. And both sorts may be influenced

more strongly, to take no improper steps on any future occasion, and to warn their friends against such errors.

I proceed therefore to say that benefices ought neither to be given, nor accepted, with any other condition or promise, than that of doing our duty in relation to them. This engagement is always understood, whether it be expressed or not: and no other should either be required or complied with. For when bishops, originally the sole patrons, to encourage the endowment of parishes, gave others a right of presenting fit persons to them; or that right was confirmed or granted by the civil power: they must be supposed to give it only to be exercised for the future, as it had been before: when whoever was appointed to any station in the church, enjoyed the benefit of all he was appointed to, so long as he behaved well. And therefore attempting to bring the clergy into a worse condition, is usurpation: and submitting to the attempt, is encouraging usurpation.

Yet there is a great difference between the things to which our submission may be demanded. Some are grossly and obviously unlawful. If for instance any person in order to obtain a benefice, promises to give up such a part of the income, to connive at such a lessening of it, to accept of such a composition for it, to allow such a pension or make such a payment to any one out of it: these things are in effect the same with laying down beforehand such a sum for it: which is the nearest approach, excepting that of bribing for holy orders, to his sin, who thought the *gifts of God might be purchased with money*, and was answered, *Thy money perish with thee**. Nor

* Acts viii. 20.

can it take away, if it alleviate the guilt, that the payment or pension, thus reserved, is allotted to uses really charitable. Still it is buying, what ought to be freely bestowed: this forced charity must disable a man from voluntary almsgiving, in proportion to its amount: and one compliance in a seemingly favourable instance, will only make way for another in a more doubtful case, and so on without end. Another excuse I hope nobody will plead; that obligations of this kind may be safely entered into, since they are notoriously void. For we can never be at liberty to make an agreement, merely because it is so bad a one, that neither law nor conscience will let us keep it.

But supposing a person binds himself to his patron, only that he will quit his benefice, when required; even this he ought not to do. For he hath no right to promise it; and no power to perform the promise. Whoever undertakes the care of a living, must continue that care till the law deprives him of it, or his superior releases him from it *. Therefore he can only subject himself to a penalty which another may exact at pleasure, unless he doth what of himself he is not able to do, and knows not whether he shall obtain permission to do. Can this be prudent? Can it be fit? If he pay the penalty, he gives money to the patron, though not for his first possession of the benefice, yet for his continuance in it: besides that he must either distress himself, or defraud religion and charity of what he ought to have bestowed on them. If then, to avoid paying it, he begs leave to resign; he puts his bishop under very unreasonable difficulties: who by refusing his request,

* See Stillingfleet on Bonds of Resignation, in the third volume of his works, p. 731.

may bring great inconveniences on the poor man: and by granting it, may lose a minister from a parish, where he was useful, and ought to have continued: may expose himself to the many bad consequences of having an improper successor presented to him. At least he will encourage a practice undoubtedly wrong and hurtful in the main, whatever it may be in the instance before him. And why are not these sufficient grounds for a denial; since whatever the incumbent suffers by it, he hath brought upon himself?

Besides, in bonds to resign, where no condition is expressed, some unfair intention almost always lies hid. For if it were an honest one, why should it not be plainly mentioned, and both sides cleared from imputations? Assuredly, unless persons are to a strange degree inconsiderate, this would be done if it could. The true meaning therefore too commonly is, to enslave the incumbent to the will and pleasure of his patron, whatever it shall happen at any time to be. So that, if he demands his legal dues; if he is not subservient to the schemes, political or whatever they are, which he is required to promote; if he reproves such and such vices; if he preaches, or does not preach, such and such doctrines; if he stands up for charity and justice to any one when he is forbidden: the terror of resignation, or the penalty of the bond, may immediately be shaken over his head. How shamefully beneath the dignity of a clergyman is such a situation as this! How grievously doth it tempt a man to unbecoming and even unlawful compliances! What suspicions doth it bring upon him of being unduly influenced, when he is not! Or however he may escape himself, what a snare may his example prove to his poor brethren of weaker minds, or less established characters!

To prevent these mischiefs, both the ancient laws of other churches, and those of our own * still in force, have strictly forbidden such contracts †. Particularly the council of Oxford, held in 1222, prescribed an oath against simony, for so it is entitled, by which every clerk shall swear at his institution, that he hath entered into no compact in order to be presented ‡. And Archbishop Courtney, in his injunctions to all the bishops of his province in 1391, condemns those, as guilty of simony, who, before presentation, engage to resign when required §: and appoints all persons instituted, to be sworn ‖, that they have not given, to obtain presentation, either oath or bond to resign ¶. Again, the constitutions of

* Stillingfleet in his Letter about Bonds of Resignation in Miscell. Discourses, p. 42, &c. shews several sorts of contracts that are allowed: and objects not against trusts and confidences [as indeed I have been assured that Dr. Bentley held a living in trust for the bishop's son]; not against what is done, in consideration of service, without a compact: but only against a legal obligation on the party, before his presentation, to perform such a condition; and if he do not, to resign.

† The council of Westminster, 1138, appoints that when any one receives investiture from the bishop, he shall swear that he hath neither given nor promised any thing for his benefice. Spelm. vol. ii. p. 39, apud Gibson Cod. p. 845.

‡ The words are, *quod propter præsentationem illam nec promiserit nec dederit aliquid præsentanti, nec aliquam propter hoc inieret pactionem:* when *hoc* most naturally refers to *negotium præsentationis* understood.

See Conc. Oxon. c. 18. in Wilkins, vol. i. p. 588; and Lyndwood, L. 2. *de Jurejurando*, cap. *præsenti*, in Wake's Charge, 1709, p. 34; and Stillingfleet on Bonds, &c. p. 721, and Letter about Bonds, p. 39.

§ But it appears, by the preamble, that it was designed only against putting it thus in the patron's power to dispose of the profits, or turn the incumbents out, and give pluralities of livings to such as he favoured.

‖ Wilkins, vol. iii. p. 216. Wake, p. 35, 36.

¶ The injunctions of Edw. VI. in 1547, appoint that such as buy benefices, or come to them by fraud or deceit, shall be deprived, &c.;

Cardinal Pole, when archbishop, in 1555, censure, as being simoniacal, all bargains or promises for procuring of benefices; and assert that benefices ought to be given without any condition, and order that the person presented shall swear, he hath neither promised, nor given, nor exchanged, nor lent, nor deposited, nor remitted, &c. any thing, nor confirmed any thing given before *. And a convocation held under him, two years after, complaining that, of late years, persons have procured benefices *et prælaturas*, [parish-priests are *prælati:* see Index to Lyndwood, in *Prælatus:*] not only vacant, but likely to become so, *non precibus et obsequiis tantum, sed et apertis muneribus*, so that *electionum saluberrimæ formæ quæ per canones liberæ esse deberent, vel fraudibus obtenebratæ sunt, vel ad compromissi necessitatem redactæ:* directs, that bishops prevent these things, and take care by themselves and their officers, especially *quos in prælatorum electionibus tanquam directores et consultores interesse continget*, that *fraudes et pactiones* be excluded: and if any one have got, *per pecuniæ et munerum sordes, prælaturam vel beneficium ecclesiasticum*, he be punished †. It is indeed true, that the great evil, at which these several directions were levelled, was giving or promising money for presentation, or receiving it for resignations ‡. And there-

and such as sell them for their own gain or profit, shall lose their right of presenting for that time. Wilkins, vol. iv. p. 7, 8.

* Wilkins, vol. iv. p. 124, 125.

† Wilkins, vol. iv. p. 165.

‡ The tenor of them shews this. Particularly the corrupt resignations were to get pensions out of benefices, or money for quitting them, or exchanges gainful to the patron or his friends. The *Ref. Leg. Eccl. Tit. de Renunciatione*, cap. 3, forbids only resignations for consideration of gain. See Wake, p. 48. And *Tit. de admittendis ad Beneficia Ecclesiastica*, c. 24, only obliges a person at in-

fore it may be argued, that where no money is directly paid, or taken, or covenanted for, nothing illegal is done. But the opinions delivered, and the judgments pronounced, by the canon lawyers, plainly extend the prohibition to whatever is equivalent to money *. And it hath been urged that by how much soever a person lessens the value of a benefice to himself by a bond of resignation to the patron in order to procure it, as unquestionably such a bond doth lessen it, so much in effect he pays to obtain it †. Or allowing, that in some cases this doth not hold: yet nothing will prevent unlawful contracts in many cases, but prohibiting in all cases absolute contracts to resign upon demand; which therefore the above-mentioned constitutions have rightly done. And as the oaths, prescribed in them, express the denial of having made such a contract; the oath prescribed at this time must naturally be understood to imply the same thing. For its being less explicit is no proof that, what in common acceptation came under the name simoniacal before, doth not come under it still.

However, we must acknowledge, that bonds of re-

stitution to swear that he neither hath given nor promised, nor will give, any thing. And *Tit. de beneficiis conferendis* forbids only compacts by which benefices are lessened. See Wake, p. 36, who goes too far in saying the words are general against all manner of contracts or promises. The preamble of the oath in Can. 40., condemns only *buying and selling* of benefices. The Latin is *nundinatio.* But Stillingfleet saith, p. 719, this takes in any benefit accruing to the patron, because *nomine emptionis et venditionis intelligitur omnis contractus non gratuitus.*

* See Wake, p. 18. 24. Stillingfleet, p. 719. 722, and Letter about Bonds, p. 46, &c. The Injunctions of Ewd. VI. forbid patrons selling livings, or by any colour bestowing them for their own gain and profit. Wilkins, vol. iv. p. 7, 8.

† Stillingfleet, p. 722.

signation on demand have been declared by the temporal judges valid, and not simoniacal *. And they are indeed the proper judges, whether they are such by the common and statute law. But whether the ecclesiastical law permits them, is not so clearly within their cognizance. Indeed all questions about this crime seem to have been entirely out of it †, till an act was made, 31 Eliz. c. 6. which *for the avoiding of simony and corruption in presentations and collations,* inflicts penalties on those who shall either give or procure them for any sum of money, profit, or benefit; or for any promise, bond, or assurance of it, directly or indirectly: but at the same time allows the ecclesiastical laws to punish the same offences which the act doth, in the same manner as they did before. Now making these provisions is not saying, that nothing shall be deemed simoniacal by the spi-

* Stillingfleet, p. 735, &c. Wake, p. 49, &c. Indeed Stillingfleet, p. 735, says that the court, having given judgment for such a bond in the case of Jones and Lawrence, 8 Jac. 1., held, seven years after, viz. 15 Jac. 1. in the case of Paschal and Clerk, that it was simony within the statute; and he cites Noy, 22, for it. But Wake mentions not this: and Watson, c. 5, p. 40, says it doth not appear by the roll that there was such a trial; and if there was, it is of no great authority, nor hath been regarded since.

† See Wake, p. 39. 50. The preamble of 5 Eliz. c. 23, compared with § 13, sufficiently intimates that simony is an offence appertaining merely to the jurisdiction and determination of the ecclesiastical courts and judges. Yet Stillingfleet, p. 718, cites from Coke, Car. 361, the judges as saying, in the case of Mackaller and Todderick, that the common law before 31 Eliz. took notice of a simoniacal contract. But Coke in Cawdrie's case, 5th Rep. fol. 8, 9, as cited by Wake, p. 50, put simony among the crimes the conusance whereof belongs not to the common but ecclesiastical law, and repeats the same, p. 40. And Coke, fol. 789, says that the judges in the case of Baker, 42 Eliz. held that it appertains to the spiritual court to determine what is simony, and not to this court to meddle therewith.

ritual judge, but what the temporal judge shall think is forbidden by this act *. And therefore, though the latter may apprehend absolute bonds of resignation to be consistent with the statute; yet the former may justly apprehend them to be inconsistent with the constitutions of the church, which we ought to obey; and with the oath against simony, which ought to be taken in the sense of those who originally enjoined and still administer it; and not to have its meaning changed on the supposed authority of their opinions, who neither have undertaken to interpret it, nor, if the judgment of their predecessors be allowed, have a right to do it.

At least refusing such bonds, on account of the oath, must be the safest side: especially, as the greatest divines of this church have declared against them: and I think none for them. Though indeed, were

* Stillingfleet, p. 718, saith, "the words simony or simoniacal "contract are never mentioned in this statute." And Wake, p. 50, cites Noy, Rep. fol. 25, as saying that "in it there is no word of "simony; because by that means the common law would have "been judge what should have been simony, and what not." And Stillingfleet, ibid. allows, that if the word had been there, the judges would have had sufficient reason to declare what was simony and what not. Now in truth part of the act which relates to the affair begins thus: "And for the avoiding of simony and corrup-"tion in presentations, collations, and donations of and to bene-"fices, &c. and in admissions, institutions, and inductions to the "same, be it further enacted, that if any person," &c. This may seem to imply that no other things but those mentioned afterwards were simony: otherwise the act would provide only for avoiding some sorts of simony. Accordingly Gibson, Cod. p. 839, and Stillingfleet, Pref. p. 714, and Dis. p. 718, think it only means to punish some particular remarkable sorts specified in it: and Wake agrees that it abrogates no ecclesiastical law. And this agrees with what is observed here, note ‡, p. 363. But still the judges, after this act, thought that judging of simony did not belong to them. See here note †, p. 365.

the oath out of the question; the bonds are apparently so mischievous, as to be for that reason alone sufficiently unlawful. It may be said, that if the patron attempts to make any ill use of them, equity will relieve the incumbent. But I have shewn you, that their consequences must be very bad, whatever use the patron makes of them. And besides, how expensive, indeed how uncertain, this pretended relief will be; how seldom therefore it will or can be sought for; and how much better on all accounts it is to avoid the need of it; every one must perceive.

But let us now suppose, that a seemingly reasonable condition were expressed in these bonds; for instance, to resign when such a relation or friend of the patron's comes to the age of being presented, who perhaps hath been educated with a view to the benefice vacant *. Now I do not say but a person may very lawfully, and sometimes very charitably, form an intention of resigning at such a period, if circumstances then should make it proper; and may also signify such intention beforehand. But if he bind

* Stillingfleet, p. 716, supposes this to be the intent, with which an absolute bond is required; and saith, it is a case, wherein a bond may be thought far more reasonable than in others. But he expresses no positive approbation of it; nor doth he mention there giving a bond with this condition expressed. But, in p. 736, he hath that case in view where he saith, "that there may be a lawful "trust in such a case, I do not question;" yet adds, "but whether "the person who takes this trust can enter into a bond and take "the oath, I very much question." And Wake, though in p. 22 he names this as one of the most favourable cases that can be desired, condemns it notwithstanding; as an obligation, which the patron has no right to impose, nor the clerk any power to enter into; as contrary to the canons, and the authority of the bishop, and the oath of yielding him canonical obedience, and of doing what in the clerk lies to maintain the rights of his see; but he doth not say it is contrary to the oath against simony.

himself to it absolutely, besides the distrust of him, which requiring this implies, perhaps when the time comes, the young person will refuse to take the benefice, or the patron to give it him; and yet the incumbent must continue in perfect dependance thenceforward: for his case is become the same, as if his bond had been originally without any condition. Besides, this contrivance for procuring an immediate vacancy at such a particular time, encourages persons, even of low rank, to purchase patronages, separate from the manors on which they were anciently appendant, merely to serve interested purposes. And the generality of these, instead of considering their right of presentation as a spiritual trust, to be conscientiously discharged, will of course look on it as a temporal inheritance, which since they have bought, they may fairly sell, at any time, in any manner, for what they can: or at best merely as the means of providing a maintenance for such persons as they please: who therefore, unless they will be cast off entirely by their friends, must, when they are of age, however unfit for the cure of souls, however averse from it, submit to be presented, and perhaps cannot be rejected. Then further, in proportion as this custom prevails, benefices, and particularly the more valuable ones, coming to be of a temporary and precarious tenure, contrary to what they were intended; persons of character and abilities, and a proper spirit, will not so often care to take them. Or if they do, they will not usually, indeed it cannot so well be expected they should, either defend the rights of them, or exercise hospitality and charity upon them, in the same manner as if they were to hold them for life. Nor will the people, generally speaking, respect those who come in thus, and must behave, and go

out again thus, as they ought always to respect their ministers.

But still persons may plead that whatever is objected against other engagements from incumbents to patrons, yet if they engage only to be constantly resident, to do faithfully the whole duty, which the laws of the church enjoin them, or perhaps somewhat more; this must be allowable. And doubtless it is, provided the engagement be only a sincere promise of acting thus, as far as they can with reasonable convenience. Nay if they bind themselves by a legal tie, to do any thing, which either belongs of course to their benefice, or hath by ancient custom been annexed to it, learned and judicious authors justify them*. But covenanting thus to do even a laudable action, as teaching school, or prescribing to the sick, if their predecessors were not, without a covenant, obliged to it, had been held unlawful and simoniacal†; because it is promising to save, which upon the matter is promising to give, so much money either to the patron, or however to those for whom he interests himself. And indeed, though persons were to promise only what in conscience they are antecedently bound to: yet if they tie themselves either to do this, or to resign; whenever they fail in any one part of it, as to be sure they will in some, sooner or later, though perhaps very innocently; supposing the rigour of their bond insisted upon, (as who can say it will not?) they are at the mercy of the patron ever after. He becomes their ordinary; and is vested, by their imprudence, with a much greater authority than the bishop hath; an authority of restraining their liberty, where the wisdom of the

* Wake's Charge, 1709, p. 24. Stillingfleet's Letter, p. 54.

† Wake, p. 18.

church hath not restrained it *: an authority of proceeding summarily; and depriving them, for whatever failures he hath though fit to insert in the bond, without delay and without appeal: and this authority he may exercise ever after, when he pleases, to just the same purposes, as if they had covenanted at first to resign when requested.

Still, without question, many good persons have both required and given bonds of resignation of these latter sorts: and in many cases, as no harm at all hath been intended, so no particular harm hath been done by them. But in so many more there hath, and it is so necessary to go by general rules; and one specious exception doth so constantly produce others that are a little less so, till at last the most pernicious practices creep in †, that there is abundant reason to refuse making any contracts whatsoever in order to obtain presentation: and more especially there is reason to refuse them, on account of their mischievous influence on the revenues of the church: which was the immediate occasion of my speaking of them now; though I thought it by no means proper to omit the other arguments against them.

Perhaps it may be said: If patrons will have bonds of resignation, what can clergymen do? I answer, If clergymen will not give them, how can patrons help themselves? They must present without them, or their right must lapse to the bishop, who will. It may indeed be replied, that though one person rejects the offer, another will accept it: and therefore he may as well. But this would equally be an excuse for the worst of wrong compliances in every kind: and consequently it is an excuse for none. Besides, it may happen, that by arguing with patrons against such

* Wake, p. 25. † Wake, ibid.

contracts, they may be convinced; and learn so just an esteem for those, who refuse them decently and respectfully, as not only to present them with double pleasure, but do them afterwards greater services, than they intended them before. At least whatever clergyman behaves in so worthy and exemplary a manner, will assuredly, if the rest of his conduct be suitable to that part, either by the care of God's providence, be raised in the world some other way; or, by the influence of God's Spirit, be made easy and happy in his present situation.

But it may be objected further, that bishops argue with an ill grace against bonds at presentation, while they themselves take them at institution. And it must be owned, that in several dioceses, particularly that of Lincoln, out of which this was taken, and of Peterborough, which was also taken from thence*, there is an ancient and immemorial custom (customs, you are sensible, not being the same every where), for the clerk presented to indemnify the bishop and his officers from all suits at law for instituting him. And accordingly in this diocese, bonds appear to have been taken for that purpose at all institutions for one hundred and twenty years past: within which time, there have been nearly, if not quite, seven hundred given, that are now lying in the registry: and hence we may presume the practice hath been the same from the erection of the see. The original of it probably was, that a commission of inquiry being formerly sent out, as old registers prove, upon

* In Lincoln diocese they are taken only when the bishop hath any the least suspicion about the patronage: in Peterborough and Lichfield always: in Canterbury whenever a new patron presents: in Gloucester and Exeter they were taken till the time of the present bishops.

every vacancy * alleged, to certify the bishop, whether the living was really vacant, who was at present the true patron, and whatever else it was requisite he should know in order to institute: and the expence of this commission, and of the proceedings upon it, being of necessity considerable to the clerk, who bore it †; the cheaper method of a bond from him to save the bishop harmless, was substituted in its room. And a further reason might be, that, the bishop having twenty-eight days allowed him, after the presentation was tendered, to consider and inform himself, whether he should institute the clerk presented or not; the clerk was willing and desirous, rather to indemnify the bishop, if he would consent to institute him sooner, than to bear the inconvenience, and perhaps charges, of waiting to the end of that time. At least the only design of this bond was and is, that if the clerk's title to institution be questionable, the bishop may not suffer by granting it. Now a covenant for this end is surely a very lawful one, and subject to none of the mischiefs, which I have shewn you, attend bonds to patrons. Nor was any constitution of Church or State ever pointed against it: nor I believe hath any harm ever happened from it.

But I must own too, that there is another condition added to these bonds, that the clerk shall resign his benefice, if required by the bishop, in case any controversy arise, whether his institution be rightful. But this provision is, in the bond, expressed to be

* That it was on every vacancy appears from Archbishop Stratford's Constitution, Sæva, A.D. 1342, in Lindw. p. 222, and from Lindw. p. 217, on Archbishop Peckham's Constitution *per nostram provinciam* verb *Inquisitionem*, and from Bishop Gibson's Codex, p. 857.

† It appears from the above Constitution of Stratford, that the clerk paid for the commission, and therefore of course for all that was done upon it.

made only for the same purpose with the former, the indemnification of the bishop; and the penalty of the bond is so moderated, as to serve that purpose and no other. Accordingly I have not heard, that any one person hath ever scrupled, in point of conscience, to enter into this engagement; the meaning of it being only, that if he prove to have no right, he shall quit: nor indeed, that any one hath found cause to scruple it it point of prudence. For as you may be sure the fulfilling it would never be required without necessity; so I believe it hath never yet been required at all. That neither the intention of this covenant was bad, nor the reasons for it contemptible, you will readily allow, on being told, that it began to be inserted constantly in this diocese, at the time when our present most reverend metropolitan was placed over it: which seeming innovation was indeed only conforming more exactly to the old example of our mother-see*. But still as it is a condition, the insisting on which, in some cases, might have bad effects, that were not foreseen †; though in such cases it probably never would be insisted on, as it never hath: I have determined, with his grace's entire approbation, to omit it for the future.

And in every thing, I shall not only be careful to make your burthens no heavier, but if it can be shewn me, that I am able to do it, with justice and equity,

* I have seen a bond from the bishop of Lincoln's registry with this covenant in it, printed in the time of Jac. II. and the bishop informs me the covenant hath been used ever since the Restoration; how much sooner he knows not.

† *e. g.* A suit may be begun which would have proved ineffectual. Yet if the incumbent resign, the expence of a fresh presentation and institution will at least be necessary for him: but indeed the patron may present another: and in the case of alternate patronage, another will present.

I shall be glad to make them lighter. The fees taken of the clergy in this diocese, whether at institutions or visitations are not varied in any one article from those, which were returned to, and not disapproved by, a committee of parliament in the time of my predecessor. They are the same, as he informs me, with those taken in the time of his predecessor. Nor have I hitherto found proof, though I have inquired with some care, that they have been increased at all materially since the bishopric was founded *. Those of visitation I am sure have not in the least. And yet the diminution of the value of money in that interval hath reduced the same sum in name and quantity, to perhaps not a fourth of what it was in effect and use: on which account proportionable augmentations of fees have been made, I believe, in all temporal courts and offices; and ancient rules to the contrary have been justly deemed obsolete, the reasons of them having ceased. So that where this hath not been done, or not to any considerable degree, there is cause to render to all their dues with great satisfaction.

And here I must take the freedom of speaking to you about some dues owing to myself, synodals and procurations. The former are an ancient acknowledgment of honour and subjection, reserved by the bishops of the western church, as long ago as when they settled their own share of the tithes, in each parish, to be the future property of the several incumbents: and it took its name from being usually paid at the synodal meetings. Now so small a tribute, especially if considered as a quiet rent for so great a concession, can surely never be thought a hardship.

t * *i. e.* Allowing each of the new instruments that are required, o cost as much as each of the old ones.

The other, procurations, are also a payment several hundred years old, succeeding in the place of a much more expensive obligation, that of entertaining the bishop and his attendants, when he visited each parish. Neither of them hath been increased since their first beginning: the right to both is indisputably legal: and as I am sworn to maintain all the rights of my see, I promise myself none of you will force me to do it in a way, that cannot be more disagreeable to you, than it will to me. If any one pleads, that complying with the demand of so trifling a sum will be inconvenient to him, it shall be more than returned him. If any one doubts, whether it is incumbent on him or not; his reasons for the doubt, whenever he lays them before me, shall be impartially considered, and allowed their full weight. But I hope no person will think it either decent or just, merely to refuse, without assigning a sufficient cause: and disuse for some years is not sufficient, in a matter, like this, of common right. Most of my clergy have very punctually shewn me this little mark of their regard, amongst many greater. Whether any here present have omitted it, I do not know. But I trust you will all have the candour to think I have mentioned it, not from any wrong or mean motive, but because I apprehend it my duty, and have not the least doubt of your willingness to be informed or reminded of every part of yours.

And with this kind of digression I must conclude for the present. If God prolong my life and health to another opportunity, I shall proceed to the remainder of the subject. In the mean time, I heartily pray him to direct and bless you in all things.

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF OXFORD,

IN THE YEAR 1750.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

In the course of my former visitations of this diocese, I have recommended to you various parts of your duty, as ministers of the Gospel in general, and of your respective parishes in particular. After things, more immediately and entirely of spiritual concern, I proceeded, in my last charge, to the care, that you are bound to take of your temporalities; with which you are intrusted, partly for the service of religion in your own times, partly for your successors, as your predecessors were for you: a trust, which if any of them broke, or neglected, you are too sensible they did ill, to be excusable to your own minds, if you imitate them. And dividing this care into the behaviour, that is requisite at your coming into livings, during your incumbency on them, and when you are to quit them: I went through the first of these heads;

giving you proper cautions, more especially against making any contract or promise inconsistent with the oath then required of you, or prejudicial to your own benefices, or the common interests of the clergy. Therefore I now go on to the second, the vigilance, with which you ought each to superintend the revenues and possessions of your church, whilst you continue minister of it.

I have too much cause, in every thing, to be sensible of my own unfitness to direct: but, in several articles, relating to this point, I am peculiarly unqualified: having little experience in them, and a yet less share of the proper abilities and turn of mind for them. However, I ought not to omit being of such use to you, as I can. There may be those amongst you, who are either still more unacquainted with these matters, or at least have not considered them all in the same light: as you must have observed, that very obvious instances, both of wisdom and duty, escape the attention of many, till they are pointed out to them. And a discourse, neither complete, nor possibly free from mistakes, may notwithstanding do service, by exciting persons to think on the subject, more than they have done hitherto.

Your care, in respect to this subject, consists of two parts: recovering what may be unduly withheld from your church, and preserving what is left.

It is very unhappy, that so troublesome and invidious an employment, as the former, should ever be made necessary: which yet it hath too often been. Glebe lands have been blended with temporal estates: and pretences set up, that only such a yearly rent, far inferior to the real value, is payable from them. Tithes and other dues have been denied; under false colours of exemptions in some cases, and of moduses

in many. Every unjust plea admitted makes way for more. And thus what was given for the support of the clergy in all future times, is decreasing continually; and becoming less sufficient, as it goes down to them. The laity themselves, if they would reflect, must see, that they have by no means any cause to rejoice in this. For, probably few of them in proportion will be gainers by what we lose: but the whole body of them, wherever the provision made for us becomes incompetent, must either make another at their own expence, or be deprived in a great measure of the good influences of our office, with respect to this world and the next. But whatever they are, we ourselves cannot surely fail to be deeply concerned at the ill aspect which these encroachments bear towards religion in ages to come. Whoever is indifferent about it, shews himself very unworthy of what he enjoys from the liberality of ages preceding. And whoever is grieved at it, will set himself to consider, not how he can augment the patrimony of the church, where it is already plentiful; or any where, by dishonourable methods: (you are very sensible, what injustice and folly there would be in such attempts) but how he can retrieve any part of it, which is illegally or unequitably seized and detained.

Now here the foundation of all must be, a diligent and impartial enquiry into the right of the case: for it would be absurd to deceive ourselves; and unfair to demand of others what we are not well persuaded is our due. Therefore to avoid both, we should ask the opinion of upright and skilful advisers. If this be in our favour, the next proper step will be, laying our claim, with the proofs of it, so far as prudence will permit, before the person concerned; representing it, in a friendly and serious manner, as an affair, in which

his conscience is interested; procuring the assistance of those, who have weight with him, if we know any such; taking the opportunity of his being, at any time, in a more considerate disposition than ordinary; pressing him, not to rely too much on his own judgment, where it may so easily be biassed: yet forbidding him to rely on ours, if he would; and begging him to consult some other worthy and able person: offering to pitch on one or more, if circumstances persuade to it, whose determination shall conclude us both: and entreating him to say, whether he would not think this, in any other case, very reasonable. If still he cannot prevail on himself to comply: we may endeavour to lessen the difficulty, by proposing to accept a small payment, where none hath been made of some time; or a small variation, where a customary payment is pleaded; in hopes, that either the desire of enjoying, with some degree of good conscience, the main of what he withholds now with a bad one; or, at least, that of avoiding the cost and hazard of a contest, may win him over.

If none of these methods (which too commonly happens) will operate, after a due season allowed them for it: the only remaining remedy is an appeal to the law. But here I would be far from exciting any of you to plainly fruitless or over-dangerous attempts. I am very sensible, how unfavourable the times are to ecclesiastical pretensions, how enormous the expences of legal proceedings, how small the incomes of most benefices, how strait the circumstances of most clergymen: considerations, that, one should think, would restrain persons of any generosity, nay of any compassion, from bearing hard upon them. But they ought not to be pleaded by any of us, to excuse ourselves from undertaking a necessary bur-

then; which perhaps we are as well able to support, as any, who will be likely to come in our stead. I am sensible too, and would have you be so, that scarce any thing is a more effectual hindrance to our doing good amongst our parishioners, than the character of being litigious; which many delight to give us: but with how little justice, in general, one single observation, amongst several that might be alleged, will more than sufficiently shew; that of seven hundred suits for tithes, brought by the clergy into the Court of Exchequer, which is only about one in fourteen parishes, during the space of fifty-three years, from the Restoration to the year 1713, six hundred were decided for them. It is true, our obtaining justice against any man, though in ever so clear a cause, is very apt to be resented, by himself and his friends at least, as grievous injustice. But using the previous amicable measures, which I have recommended, must in some degree prevent, either severe imputations upon us, or however the belief of them; and if not entirely, yet, by mildness and prudence, we may certainly regain in time the reputation, we never deserved to lose. At least our successors will enjoy, free from all blame, what we recover to them: whereas if we acquiesce in the detention of our due, they will still be more likely to do so, and thus the loss of it will be perpetuated. Therefore in cases both sufficiently plain, and of sufficient importance, when all other ways have been tried to no purpose, and the right will be either extinguished, or much obscured, by delay; and perhaps the example spread further; I see not, how we can excuse ourselves from applying to a proper court of justice, if we can hope to procure a sentence from it, without absolute ruin, or extreme distress. For it is a mean and wicked selfishness, to

hoard up wealth, consult our ease, or court the favour of our superiors, by letting the inheritance of the church be impoverished, while the guardianship of it is in our hands.

But then we must be doubly careful of what all men should be abundantly more careful of, than most are, that we never awe persons, especially poor persons, unjustly, by threatening them with law, into a compliance with our demands; and that no dispute of this kind ever entice us to do any thing fraudulent, or provoke us to do any thing ill-natured or vexatious. And particularly, if we have a demand on any of the people called Quakers, we should, if we possibly can, pursue it by that method only, which the act, for the more easy recovery of small tithes, hath provided: and rather sit down with a moderate loss, than do otherwise. For they are a generation, loud in their complaints, unfair in their representations, and peculiarly bitter in their reflections, where we are concerned: unwearied in labouring to render us odious, and surprisingly artful in recommending themselves to the great.

But I proceed to the less troublesome and disagreeable duty of preserving what we still possess. Now to this end the most obvious way is, keeping the glebe in our own hands, and taking the tithes and all other dues, ourselves: for which reason probably, amongst others, both ancient ecclesiastical constitutions, and later acts of parliament, have restrained and limited leasing of benefices. But many are so little qualified for this, and would be so great losers by it: and others would find it such a hindrance to the discharge of their ministerial office, or the pursuit of useful studies: nay, where it hath been long disused, the people might perhaps be so much offended

with the novelty: that I would by no means press doing it in all cases, but only recommend it in proper ones. And where it is done, if a clergyman were to attend to such matters too closely; and, above all, were to be over-watchful and strict about small demands: it would naturally raise a contempt, if not hatred of him. And therefore it will be much better to content ourselves with giving parishioners, by prudent instruction, a general sense of their obligation to pay their dues; and by engaging behaviour, a general disposition to it; than to exact the minuter sorts of them with an indecent eagerness. But still, where rights, that may seem inconsiderable in each particular case, amount to more on the whole, than it is convenient to lose; and yet will be withheld, if not insisted on: we must do it, with as good a grace as we can; and remind persons, if there be need, that such as make this necessary, are indeed they, who act the mean part: that it is no fault of ours to require what the law hath allotted us for our maintenance; but a great misfortune, that so much of it consists in these petty articles.

Whatever tithes it will be incommodious to keep in our own hands, we may compound for with those who should pay them, or lease them to others. The former way will usually be kinder and more obliging, and so far more eligible. Yet on the other hand, if we choose the latter, our lessee will probably find it his interest to take them in kind, which will preserve our title to them in kind: and therefore it may at least be expedient sometimes, in relation to any questionable parts of them. But if a tenant will rather give up some of our rights, than be at the trouble of asserting them, we may be under a necessity of doing it ourselves. And if we let any of our tithes to

the proprietor of what they arise from, or to whomsoever we let our glebe, it should never be for too long a time at the same rent: else we run a great risk of being told, that we are entitled to nothing more. The person indeed, who makes the agreement with us, cannot think so: and yet what even he may pretend to our successors, we cannot foresee. But the person, that comes after him, may insist on it even to us: and though the evil should be delayed longer, it will happen much too soon. Written agreements, discreetly worded, may be an useful and effectual preventive. Yet these, in course of time, may be lost by various accidents: or constancy of the same unvaried payment be alleged as a stronger argument on one side, than they are on the other. And if either should prove our case, contending at law with any parishioner will be a very undesirable thing: and contending with a powerful one may be an impracticable thing. Therefore we ought never to begin customs, that may be dangerous: and if they are begun, even by our predecessor's fault, and yet more if by our own, we should think how to stop them without delay. But the least we can do, is resolutely to refuse authorizing such invasions, by giving any thing under our hands, which may but seem an acknowledgment that what we receive is a prescript and unchangeable payment, unless we are very well assured that the law will esteem it such. We ought rather to lose it ourselves, than procure it by an act, that will prejudice our successors. Barely continuing to accept it unaltered, is doing more than enough to their disadvantage: therefore we ought on no account to go further; but on the contrary, labour to procure and perpetuate, if we can, such evidence, as may be of service to them.

Nor should we be careful only to preserve our benefices from any diminution of income, but also from any addition of expence, which would amount to the same thing: for heavy burthens, and very unfit ones, of riotous entertainments in particular, and those sometimes at the most improper seasons, have been introduced and established, in many places, by the inconsiderateness and supineness of incumbents. We shall do well, absolutely to break and annihilate such customs, if it remains legally possible: and if not, to use our utmost influence towards procuring the consent of the persons concerned, to change them into something else, less exceptionable and more useful, to be secured to them as firmly, as may be; with a covenant added, that they shall be entitled to return to their old usage, if ever they are denied the benefit of the new.

Provided the above-mentioned precautions be observed, we are much at liberty to treat our parishioners as kindly as we will: and very kindly we ought to treat them: never permitting them, if we know it, to go without any thing, which is their right; to pay any thing, which is not due; or even to take any thing too dear: always making them equitable abatements, admitting every tolerable excuse for their delays of payment; and rather choosing to lose ever so much by them, than with any shadow of justice be accused of cruelty towards them. Yet when we shew them any indulgence, we should let them see, we are sensible of what we do for them; else they may impute it to our ignorance, not our goodness. And we ought not to be so easy with them, as to set them against a successor, who cannot afford to imitate us; or disqualify ourselves, by a promiscuous kindness to all, from being especially

kind to such as want. But whatever improvements we make in our benefices, by whatever just means, it will be a prudent guard against envy, as well as a right behaviour on other accounts, to increase, at the same time, either a sober modest hospitality, for neither excess nor vain shew at all become our function; or, which is yet better, and ought never to be excluded by the other, a judicious charity; above all, to the industrious and virtuous poor, extended to their souls, as well as their bodies.

For the purpose of recovering or preserving the rights of vicarages, the original endowments of them may be very useful. And these you are to seek for in the register books of the diocese of Lincoln, out of which this was taken. But I have collected copies of some; and can direct you to books, printed or manuscript, in which are copies of others: or to that part of the register books, in which they may be found: and shall gladly give any of you whatever information is in my power. But you must not always conclude your present rights to be neither more nor less, than such an endowment sets forth; both because there may be a subsequent one, with variations; and because, where no subsequent one appears, long custom, in particular cases, may create a legal presumption, that there was one, upon which that custom was grounded.

For the same use, in rectories, as well as vicarages, terriers were directed: how anciently, I cannot say. But the 87th canon of 1603 enjoins, that the bishop of each diocese shall procure them to be taken, by the view of honest men in every parish, to be appointed by him, whereof the minister to be one: it specifies the particulars, of which they shall consist, and orders them to be laid up in the bishop's registry. How

often they shall be taken, it doth not mention. But plainly the changes, which time introduces, particularly in the names of the parcels and abuttals of glebe lands, require a renewal of terriers at reasonable distances. This canon hath been observed so imperfectly, that of about two hundred parishes, of which this diocese consists, there are terriers in the registry of no more than about one hundred and twenty-six: and of most of them only one: and of these, not twenty, since the year 1685. In the convocation of 1704, complaints were made of the like omissions elsewhere: and in those of 1710, 1714, 1715, a scheme was formed, that where no terrier had been made for seven years then last past (which looks as if a repetition every seven years was intended *), the minister should make one with the churchwardens, or such parisioners as the bishop should appoint: that three indented copies of it in parchment should be signed by them; one to be exhibited at the bishop's next visitation, the second at the archdeacon's, and the third put in the parish chest †. But these proposals having never received the sanction of due authority, are to be considered as no more than prudent directions: the canon of 1603 still continues our only legal rule. And I am very desirous to perform the part, which it assigns to me. But then I must beg your assistance in order to my nominating proper persons, that is, parisioners of the greatest probity, knowledge, and substance, to be joined in the work with you. Terriers

* Prideaux, Directions to Churchwardens, section 99, saith, that the bishop at every visitation usually requires a new terrier. Bishop Gibson proposes that there should be a new one where there had been none since the Restoration.

† See Wilkins, vol. iv. p. 638. 656. It was also proposed that a calendar should be made of those which were put in the registry, and that they should not be delivered out, without security given.

indeed are of more use in causes tried before ecclesiastical judges, than temporal: who will not allow the spiritual judicatures to be courts of record; but still, when regularly made, they will have some weight every where. At least they will be valuable and authentic informations to your successors: and probably the parishioners of future times will be ashamed to insist on claims, contrary to what they will see inserted under the hands of their predecessors, perhaps their fathers or near relations. But then, to produce these good effects, indeed to prevent their producing bad ones, they must be made with great care. If there be a preceding terrier, it must be consulted; if it be defective, the defects must be supplied: if it be accurate, there must be no variations from it in the new, but where they are necessary to render descriptions intelligible; or where other alterations have been made that require them. For contradictory terriers will hurt, if not destroy, each other's evidence. It will also be right to express in them, what peculiar burthens are incumbent on the minister, or that there are none, as well as what property belongs to him. But if his right or obligation, to any thing, be doubtful: either no terrier must be made, till the doubt is removed; or it must be set down there as a doubtful point; but by no means given up, to please any person, or serve any purpose whatever. For terriers, that make against the clergy, will do them abundantly more harm, than such, as make in their favour, will do them good. And lastly, though it may be needless and inconvenient to employ many persons in drawing up a terrier, yet the more sign it, the better; especially of considerable persons: for to omit any of them, and multiply the names of others, will appear suspicious. And as it may not always be easy to

neighbouring parishes; the thanksgivings, prayers, and sentences of Scripture, with which the injunctions of Queen Elizabeth direct it to be accompanied, will render it a very pious ceremony: and the civil benefits of it may be considerable. For though, without it, there seldom will arise any question, to what parish, lands that have been long cultivated, appertain: yet concerning others, in the whole or in part, there often doth. And some, that are worth but little at present, may come hereafter to be of great value.

But, besides preserving the incomes of our benefices from encroachments, we are bound to preserve the lands and edifices, belonging to them, in good condition. If therefore we commit waste on our glebe, or, through covetousness or negligence, impoverish it, or suffer our tenant to impoverish it, we act dishonourably and unjustly: as also, if we permit our dwelling-houses or out-buildings to fall into decay, for want of early or sufficient repair. A small expence in time may prevent the necessity of a much larger afterwards, and thus, by neglecting it, we may hurt ourselves; which would doubtless be unwise; but designedly throwing the burthen on our successor deserves a harsher name. And if we either squander extravagantly, or hoard avariciously, what we save thus; it doubles the fault. If mere indolence be the cause of our omission; it is by no means a good principle; and produces effects, as bad, as if it were a worse. Nay, if we are influenced by the desire of making only a reasonable provision for our families; we have no right to provide for them by wronging our successor: and perhaps depriving our parishioners of the benefit of having a minister resident amongst them. Possibly some may say, that their

he left it you in no better? If not, that which was his duty, is now yours. These things all incumbents ought to consider: but some more especially; as they who have large benefices, and they who have two: which may be ordinarily supposed equivalent to a large one. Yet these latter, in how good order soever they may, for their own sakes, keep the house they usually reside in, have too often left the other to be treated as a farmer or tenant pleases: till it hath grown, if not ruinous, yet very unsuitable to its next proper inhabitant. Again, rich persons, that are possessed of poor livings, ought peculiarly to reflect, how noble an opportunity is put into their hands of being benefactors to them: by repairing, or if need be, rebuilding, and fitting up, the houses; and improving whatever little space of ground lies about them, in such manner, as will make both comfortable to the succeeding owners. And the very different method, which they have sometimes taken, of living in better habitations themselves, and letting these run into decay, is extremely ungenerous and illiberal. Yet indeed, on the other hand, making parsonages or vicarage houses, or the appurtenances of them, so large for their own convenience, as to bring on afterwards too great an expence in supporting them, would be a mark, either of much vanity, or little consideration.

On this whole subject I might, instead of persuasion, use authority alone. But as the latter would be much less pleasing to me: so I hope the former will be as effectual with you. Else, the laws of the church in this nation, empower the bishop, if incumbents do not repair their houses in a decent manner *,

* Semper tamen rationabilis consideratio sit habenda ad facultates ecclesiæ. "Const. Edm. Si Rector;" on which Lynwood's note

But whatever care you ought to take, and I ought to see that you take, in relation to your houses: there is still a much greater, for the same reasons and more, due from you, who are rectors, in relation to your chancels; and I am yet more expressly authorized, by statute-law as well as canon, to superintend this matter. Chancels are the most sacred part of the church: and the whole church ought to be preserved in a condition, worthy of that Being, whose it is; and fit to inspire his worshippers with reverence. The light of nature taught the heathens to adorn their temples*. God himself provided, by express and minute directions, for the beauty of his sanctuary amongst the Jews: the ancient Christians imitated these precedents, as soon as ever the danger of persecution ceased †: and if the following ages carried their notions of magnificence and ornament in religious edifices too far, as undoubtedly they did, in heaping up treasures there, which had much better have been distributed to the poor, than kept to provoke the envy and avarice of the great: yet in this country, for several generations past, the contrary extreme hath prevailed to so shameful a degree, as must needs give papists an exceeding great disgust to protestantism; and infidels no small contempt of Christians, as either despising inwardly the religion they profess, or being too sordid to pay it the common outward marks of respect.

Now what hope can we have of bringing our people back, unless we set them the example? What can we say to our parishioners about their churches, or to lay-impropriators about their chancels; or, say what we will, how can it be expected they should

* Hor. Od. xv. Lib. ii. and Sat. ii. Lib. ii. v. 103, 104, 105.

† See Bingham.

which must gradually bring them to decay: water undermining and rotting the foundations, earth heaped up against the outside, weeds and shrubs growing upon them, or trees too near them. Where sufficient attention is paid to these things: too frequently the floors are meanly paved, or the walls dirty or patched, or the windows ill glazed, and it may be in part stopt up, or the roof not ceiled: or they are damp, offensive and unwholesome, for want of a due circulation of air. Now it is indispensably requisite to preserve them not only standing and safe, but clean, neat, decent, agreeable: and it is highly fit to go further, and superadd, not a light and trivial finery, but such degrees of proper dignity and grandeur, as we are able, consistently with other real obligations. Perhaps they may have been long, or perhaps always, as mean as they are at present. But the meanness which in ages of less elegance might give no offence, may justly give more than a little now. And why should not the church of God, as well as every thing else about us, partake of the improvements of later times? In several of your chancels, I doubt not, every thing which I have been recommending is done. In others you have resolved to do it; and if any have not rightly considered the matter before, they must be sensible that it was my duty to admonish them, and is theirs to regard the admonition. For, as to the excuses, which may be pleaded under this head of chancels, they have been obviated, under the former of parsonage-houses.

It only remains now, that I speak briefly to the third point, our obligations in regard to the temporalities of our benefices, when we have a near view of quitting them: whether by death, which may be near us at any time, and must be so in old age; or

any other way. Some, because they were not to continue incumbents long, have set themselves to consult their own interests, by neglect of all expensive duties, by committing waste, by allowing others to commit it. A manner of proceeding, in all cases unjust: when they are removing to a better income, peculiarly dishonourable: when they see their latter end approach, shockingly wicked; unless the decay of their faculties furnish some excuse for them. Rejecting therefore all such practices with just abomination, we are bound, in these circumstances, to consider seriously, what our past faults and omissions, relating to this article, have been: to undo, as far as we can, what we have done amiss: to do immediately what we ought to have done sooner: to make the amends we are able, if any harm hath happened by the delay; and indeed, some amends for the chance there was, that harm might have happened. But how rightly soever we may have acted hitherto, there will still be duties, peculiar to the time, which I am now supposing; that we secure to our successors, whatever books, deeds, and papers, relating to our benefices, came down to us from our predecessors; whatever evidences our own incumbency hath furnished; in a word, whatever notices may be of importance, concerning the rights, or the value, of the living we enjoy. But particularly, if we have been so inconsiderate, as to make any long agreement, which a succeeding minister may be in danger of mistaking, or others may be tempted to set up, for an established prescription; as may easily happen if it was done many years ago: we ought to leave them the most authentic proofs of the real state and truth of the case. Some have through indolence omitted these things. Others have designedly kept in their

own power, or left in that of their executors, all such means of information; that their successors, in order to receive them, may be bound to behave reasonably and kindly, as they are pleased to term it; that is, may be under a necessity of submitting to whatever unreasonable things shall be demanded of them; in respect of dilapidations, or any other point. This, you cannot but see, would be making an unfaithful use of those lights, which have been entrusted with you by others, and an oppressive one of those which you have added yourselves. Or supposing that only equitable requests are made to a successor, and that he refuses them: still it is not a Christian part, to prevent this injury by threatening, and much less to revenge it by doing, what in all likelihood would be a far greater injury; and may extend its bad effects beyond the person who hath given the provocation, to all that shall fill his place hereafter, though perfectly innocent; and to every one that might have shared in the advantage of their enjoying a more plentiful income. Nor is it sufficient, that you disapprove such conduct, unless you make a due provision, that your representatives when you are gone shall not be guilty of it. You may have a better opinion of them, in this respect, than they deserve: at least, there can be no harm in taking a little more care of such a matter, than might be absolutely necessary.

One powerful motive, to be careful in all the points which I have been mentioning, is, that few things will contribute more to your maintaining while you live, and leaving when you die, the character of men of probity and honour, amongst your neighbours in general, and your brethren of the clergy in particular, than your diligent and disinterested attention to act

worthily and kindly in relation to your successors, though probably you know them not, or however have no personal connection with them. Nor will many things throw a blacker or more lasting stain upon persons, than a low cunning, or a selfish indifference, in these affairs. But indeed conscience, as well as reputation, is deeply concerned in the matter, as I doubt not but you are all sensible. Nor surely will any one else imagine, either that my exhortations to you, any more than yours to your hearers, imply you to be guilty of, or especially inclined to, any of the faults, against which they are levelled; or that, by speaking thus long of your worldly affairs, I seem to think them of weight equal, or comparable, to your spiritual functions. But the best of us have need to be admonished of all our duties, be they duties of higher rank or lower, each in their turns. Temporal things are not to be neglected: and those least of all, which are set apart for the service of things eternal. But then we must be watchful over them, in order to employ them, as they were meant to be employed: and if we preserve and transmit them ever so faithfully, but use them unfaithfully: studying only or chiefly to enrich or advance ourselves, or gratify our sensual appetites, or love of diversions, or of elegant appearance, by means of those revenues, which were given us for ends widely different: (partly to make a comfortable and moderate, not a superfluous and invidious provision for ourselves and ours, and partly to serve the purposes of religion and charity) we offend God, sin against our brethren, and provoke men to take from us what they are too ready to say we do no good with: as indeed little would be done, were such a conduct general. It is true, and the laity ought to consider it a great deal more than they do,

that we have very few of us much, if any thing, to spare. But they who have, should *let their light shine before men,* and be seen to lay it out in pious uses prudently chosen: and the poorest should occasionally give what alms they can; and make amends for their inability on this head, by a double diligence in useful instruction, pious example, and obliging behaviour, to the meanest of their people. Without a remarkable degree of such care, we shall have few or no friends: and notwithstanding it, we shall have many enemies. This is hard treatment: but angry complaints will only make it worse; and the most reasonable expostulations not much better, unless we first consider, wherein we are faulty or defective, and amend it; wherein we are unjustly blamed or suspected, and clear ourselves; then patiently persevere in well-doing, *in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, through honour and dishonour, through evil report and good report* *. Other means, if they could support us, cannot enable us to answer the end of our institution. But by these we may still hope not only to confute, but which must ever be our chief aim, if possible to convert, at least to mollify, our adversaries; and so recommend ourselves to more impartial persons, that they may *receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save their souls* †. Or should we, after all, in respect of ever so many, *labour in vain, and spend our strength for nought, yet our judgment is with the Lord, and our work with our God* ‡.

* 2 Cor. vi. 4. 6, 7, 8. † James i. 21. ‡ Isa. xlix. 4.

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF OXFORD,

IN THE YEAR 1763.

REVERENDBRETHREN,

I HAVE never attempted in my former visitations, nor shall I in this, to entertain you with any thing new and curious: thinking it much fitter for me, and better for you, to speak to you of such points, immediately relating to common practice, as, though easily understood, are too frequently disregarded. With this view I have gone through the principal parts of your duty, as parochial ministers, in respect both of spirituals and temporals. But besides what is wholly incumbent on yourselves, in some things you are jointly concerned with your churchwardens: and in others, though not expressly commissioned by law to interpose, you may do it nevertheless, with peculiar propriety, weight, and influence.

Of the former sort are those offences against religion and morals, which the churchwardens are bound by oath to present; and the incumbent, or his curate,

empowered and charged by the one hundred and thirteenth and following canons to join with them in presenting, if need be; or to present alone, if they refuse. This naturally implies, what the twenty-sixth canon expresses, that the minister is to urge the churchwardens to perform that part of their office. Indeed your first endeavour should be, by due instructions and exhortations, to hinder such offences; your next, by due reproofs, public or private, to amend them. But if both prove ineffectual, what remains is, to get them corrected by authority. I am perfectly sensible, that both immorality and irreligion are grown almost beyond the reach of ecclesiastical power: which having in former times been very unwarrantably extended, hath since been very unjustly and imprudently cramped and weakened many ways. I am sensible also, that sometimes churchwardens, nay even ministers, are so dependent on persons, who deserve to be presented, that they cannot present them without imminent hazard of ruining themselves: and farther still, that some offenders, if they were thus exposed, would only become worse, and set themselves to make others worse; while some again, as the Apostle expresses it in this very case, would be *swallowed up with overmuch sorrow* *. Now surely it cannot have been designed by our gracious Redeemer, or the rulers of his church, that the power of spiritual censures, which the same Apostle hath twice declared the Lord to *have given for edification, not for destruction* †, should be exercised in circumstances like these. Therefore when circumstances are evidently and undeniably of this kind, I think you should not insist on your churchwardens' presenting. But there is much more danger of their being guilty

* 2 Cor. ii. 7. † 2 Cor. x. 8. and xiii. 10.

of too great remissness, than running into overmuch rigour. And therefore you must advise and intreat them to make presentments of sinners, where probably it will be useful; and to contemn the displeasure of bad people, when it can have no extremely ill consequences, (of which there is commonly much more fear than is necessary), for the hope of their amendment and the good of others round them. The very office of churchwardens obliges them to this: their oath yet more firmly. If they are backward still, after being told it doth; you must acquaint them, that you are directed by the twenty-sixth canon (in the execution of which however, as in all points of discipline, discretion should be used), to refuse them the holy communion; not indeed for every neglect of presenting offences, but if they wilfully neglect it in desperate defiance of their oath, when they are urged to it by their neighbours, their minister, or ordinary: for so the same canon describes the case: in which case likewise you will inform them, the court is authorized, by canon one hundred and seventeen, to proceed against them for perjury. But, along with these terrors, you will be sure to join fitting encouragements. You will promise to defend them to the parishioners, and even to the person presented, as doing only their duty. You will assure them, as you may, first, that the court will take notice of their presentments, no farther, than is proper; so that they shall not incur the displeasure of the offenders and their friends for nothing; then, that it will proceed, not with a view to gain, but to reformation and example; not with excessive, nor, if it can be avoided, with the utmost rigour, but with equity and moderation.

If all this be unsuccessful, you must, in cases that

require it, offer to join with them, or even resolve to present without them. But you must never take any step in these matters, much less the more extraordinary steps, from motives of resentment, interest, or party. If such inducements can be with any colour of reason imputed to you, they will so grievously discredit what you do, that probably you had better do nothing. But only take care to shew, that you act merely from good intention, accompanied with temper and prudence, after trying gentler methods in vain: and some will vindicate, and even applaud you: more will inwardly and silently respect you: and the number of the rest will not be formidable.

But then whoever brings a complaint, must enable the court to take due cognizance of it: else presentments will be despised; and the consequences be worse, than if they had not been made. Evidence must of necessity be furnished: otherwise there can be no proceeding. Expences, I hope I may promise, will be as low as possible; and they should be cheerfully borne for the good of the parish and the public. It is not reasonable that the court should bear them. Temporal courts never do. And besides, there is room for plausible, though unjust, suspicions of partiality, where the judge appears to be in effect prosecutor too, and is interested in condemning the party accused.

Wen persons are presented, you must use your best endeavours to make them sorry, not merely that they are in danger of being punished, but principally that they have sinned: and in proportion as you succeed in that, recommend them to such favour, as can be shewn them. When persons are excommunicated (which I heartily wish no one ever was but for crimes, though indeed a wilful contempt of authority is a great crime), you must press them to consider se-

riously, how they would be affected, if a physician or a lawyer of eminence pronounced their case desperate; and of how much greater importance the concerns of eternity are, than those of time. You must also admonish them, that slighting a censure, passed on them for their amendment, will make their condition still more deplorable. And when they have been denounced excommunicate, by the eighty-fifth canon, the churchwardens are to see, that in every meeting of the congregation they be kept out of the church. Nor must you suffer them to be sureties for children in baptism, to receive the holy eucharist, or to have Christian burial. Farther, if they continue without absolution for three months, the sixty-fifth canon directs you to declare them excommunicate in the parish-church every half-year; that others, meaning such as have no necessary connexions with them, may thereby be admonished to refrain their company, and excited the rather to procure out a writ *de excommunicato capiendo;* that is, if the circumstances of the case make it requisite. Again, when persons do penance, you must be diligent to make them seriously sensible of the usefulness of such discipline; and the unspeakable obligations they have to the Gospel of Christ, which alone assures men of forgiveness on any terms. And lastly, both on all such, and all other fit occasions, you must remind your people, that however the censures of the church may be relaxed or evaded, the final judgment of God on obstinate sinners is both unavoidable and insupportable.

Besides the presentment of persons who give offence, you are concerned likewise in that of things belonging to the church, which are not kept in good repair and order.

I have already spoken to you concerning the repair

of your houses and chancels: and enlarged on the reasons, why both, but especially the latter, should be always preserved not only in a firm and safe, but decent and respectable state. Now the same reasons hold in regard to the rest of the church: and after you have set the example in your own part, you may with reputation and weight call on your parishioners to do what is proper in theirs. And indeed you are bound to it. For, as John of Athon hath justly observed*, *Licet per consuetudinem exoneretur rector a sumptibus præstandis, non tamen eximitur a curâ et solicitudine impendendâ.* Thus far even the body of the church is still under your inspection; and if any thing be remarkably amiss there, and you take no notice; good and considerate persons will lament it, as a bad sign and of bad consequence: others will make your indifference a plea to excuse their own; and yet while they are glad of it, will be likely enough to condemn you for it: and perhaps be led by it to think meanly of religion, as well as of you. Besides, churchwardens have often but little sense of propriety in these matters: therefore you should labour to give them a sense of it: convince them, by reason and Scripture, of the honour due to the house of God, shew them, that their own honour too is interested; that a church in a handsome condition is a credit to the whole parish; and in particular to the officers, who have put it in that condition, and whose names will be long remembered on that account. They are often afraid of the expence. Argue with them, that things may be done gradually, and so the expence be rendered almost imperceptible: persuade them to lessen their expences in needless matters; in eating and drinking at visitations, and on other occasions,

* Const. Othob. 17. verb. *ad hoc tenentur.* p. 113.

sometimes to excess, never to any good purpose; and observe to them, how much righter and more commendable it would be, to lay out or lay up that money for proper uses: how shameful indeed, to squander it in riot and folly, and be never the better, but the worse the next day; when they might dispose of it so, as to see the good effects for years, and have them seen for ages. If still you cannot influence the present churchwardens, try their successors. You have a concurrent right with the parishioners in choosing them; and if your opinions differ, you are to choose one, they another: unless there be a custom to the contrary. Surely then, within some reasonable time, you may get such as will hearken to you. If you fail of success that way, desire your people to reflect how their money goes; not in fees of visitations, which are no higher now, than when the value of money was thrice, perhaps five times, higher, but in extravagance and intemperance: that therefore they ought not to complain of the court, but of their own officers; indeed ought to disallow the wrong and idle articles of their accounts; and may be assured, the court will support them in doing so.

Sometimes the churchwardens are willing to lay out the money as they ought, but the parishioners unwilling. In that case you must acquaint the former, that no man's consent is wanted for their repairing and keeping in good order, both the church, and every thing belonging to it, which is either necessary, or which they found there; nor is the consent of every man requisite, but of the majority only of a parish meeting duly called, for adding any thing new, provided the ordinary approve it. However, they should do their utmost, and you should assist them, to procure the concurrence of all the parishioners;

or at least, of as many as possible: to whom you will represent for this end, that a moderate expence now will prevent a much greater hereafter: that almost all the churches in the nation were built many ages ago, and a very great part of them about the same time: that without constant and substantial repairs, in another generation or another century, they will be falling at the same time; and how will they be rebuilt? The inhabitants, if we may guess from what we see at present, will be both less able and less inclined. As for help from briefs: those for other things produce but little; but those for churches extremely little; to the great shame indeed of persons, who call themselves Christians: and you should labour to rectify their prejudices on this head, and excite them to be more charitable. But God knows whether they will; and if hereafter they should, what can be hoped from it, when almost every parish in the land will want a brief? In many, it is to be feared there will be no churches; in others, wretchedly mean ones: to the contempt of all religion amongst infidels, and of the protestant religion amongst papists. Repeat and inculcate it therefore on your people, that they must take care of the churches they have: if not, their posterity will run the risk of having none. Too many will scarcely be moved even by that consideration: but there is the more need of moving such as you can: and, getting into a condition of moving more, by all proper methods of recommending the Gospel and yourselves.

But to persons of rank and figure in your parishes, one should hope you might apply with very fair prospect of success. To these you may surely represent at favourable seasons, that labouring people part very hardly with the money which they get very

hardly: that therefore their superiors should not only use their influence and example to make them willing, but indeed should do for them what perhaps they are almost as unable to do, as they are unwilling; especially what goes any length beyond repairs absolutely necessary: for that people of low degree, though they may have some notion of neatness and elegance, yet will murmur grievously to pay much for it in their churches, and part of their ill-humour will fall on the doctrine taught there: that especially if they are tenants, their concern in the place being temporary, and possibly also short or uncertain, they will of course endeavour to shift off the burthen from themselves: but that landlords have a more lasting interest, and will find their account better in doing things early at their own cost, than in letting them run on, till the cost is much greater: for then, in some shape or other, it must come out of their pockets. With these considerations you will not fail to join others of a higher nature: that sacred fabrics are appropriated to the noblest of uses, the worship of the great God; and to preserve or put them in a condition suitable to it, is one very proper method of expressing and cherishing a sense of piety in their own minds, and spreading it through their families, neighbours and dependants; whereas, by suffering his house to be an object of contempt and scorn, while perhaps they spare nothing to beautify their own, they will be understood, and will tempt all around them, to despise the service performed there, and him to whom it is paid: that repairing and embellishing their churches will employ the poor full as beneficially, as adorning their seats and gardens, and procure them a much better grounded, and more general, esteem. Indeed it is surprising, that noblemen

and gentlemen will squander vast sums in the gratification of private luxury and vanity, for which more condemn than applaud them; and not consider, that much smaller sums bestowed on public works, especially in honour of religion, would gain them the admiration of a whole country; and the peculiar blessing of many, whom they would thus ease from burthens: besides that they might shew their good taste, if that be the favourite point with them, no less in one way than the other. But even heathen writers have observed long ago, that expensive personal indulgence, and mean-spirited parsimony in what regards the community, are often companions, and always ill symptoms *.

But you may press the obligation of repairing and ornamenting yet more strongly, both on such of the nobility and gentry, and on such colleges and ecclesiastical persons or bodies, as are impropriators: and likewise on the lessees of these latter; because they have a more beneficial interest in the estate, than the lessors. Being possessed of the greater share of what was originally given for the support of the service and the fabric, they are bound, at least in conscience, to take care of both, if it be needful: but of one part of the fabric, the chancel, they are indisputably bound by law to take care. And yet too commonly even those amongst them, who should be the most attentive to this point, strangely neglect it; or throw it on their tenants, who they know will of course neglect it; and concern themselves no farther. So their chancels are only in such sort of repair, as their barns and out-houses. Now handsome benefactions to put them in a better condition, given from time to time, and especially when good fines are received, would

* Cic. pro Flacco. Hor. Od. L. ii. 15. Sat. L. ii. 2. 103, 104, 105.

shew piety and generosity at once; would abate the unjust envy and hatred, to which academical and ecclesiastical owners of estates are liable; and set an example, which others might probably imitate.

I have already said, in speaking of chancels, that the ornaments of sacred places ought not to be light and gaudy, but modest and grave. Amongst these a very proper one, of the cheaper kind, is, writing on the walls chosen sentences of Scripture. This was done as early as the fourth century *: but in process of time, ceased to be done, at least in the vulgar tongue: and being restored at the Reformation, was forbidden, as promoting that cause, by Bishop Bonner in Queen Mary's reign †. It not only diversifies the walls very agreeably and decently, but affords useful matter for meditation to the people, before the service begins; and may afford them useful admonition, when their eyes and thoughts are wandering in the course of it. For these reasons, I presume, the eighty-second canon directs, that such sentences be written in convenient places; and likewise, that the ten commandments be set upon the east end of every church and chapel: to which undoubtedly, the Creed and Lord's Prayer, though not mentioned in the canon, are very fit companions.

You must also endeavour, that such care may be taken of the furniture of the church, and whatever is used in it, as the canons and rubrics, and the nature of the thing, require: that the surplice be originally of proper linen, and kept clean, and renewed before it becomes contemptible by age: that the Bible and Prayer Books be whole and unsullied, and well bound: that the vessels for the celebration of both the sacraments, and the cover of the holy table, but more

* Bing. viii. 8. 3. † Wilkins, vol. iv. p. 108.

especially the bread and wine placed upon it, be suitable in all respects to the solemnity: not such as may give disgust to the more delicate, and tempt them to abhor, as the Scripture expression is, *the offering of the Lord**. These are in their kind, points of importance: and such as you may for the most part easily carry. Another thing, worthy of notice, is the condition of your church-yards. I take it for granted, though I am afraid I forgot to name it, that you keep those, which belong to yourselves, neat and decent: not turning in cattle to defile them, and trample down the grave-stones; and make consecrated ground such, as you would not suffer courts before your own doors to be; but taking the profits of the herbage in such manner, as may rather add beauty to the place. And I hope where a church-yard belongs to an impropriator, you will do your best to get the same respect paid it; and to whomsoever it belongs, the fences well kept up.

If, in any or all of the particulars, which I have specified, your representations will be less offensively introduced, or your attempts be of more weight, for your being able to say, that I directed you to make them, I do hereby direct you accordingly; and desire you to say, that I did. Nor should you be contented with a transient mention of the subject once or twice; but where there is any hope, return to it on proper occasions, and try the force of modest importunity. If, after competent trial, you find no effect, you must urge the churchwardens to present what is amiss, if they will do no more. Indeed such things as belong to their own care, they should not present, but amend: and the canons require not the former, but the latter. Only when they have not

* 1 Sam. ii. 17.

time for the latter, the former is all they can do: and when they have, it is better than doing nothing. For it gives notice, and furnishes room for admonitions and injunctions. If there be need, here again you must encourage them to present, by engaging to plead their cause with the parishioners. You may also safely promise them, that they shall suffer no oppressive or hard treatment, shall not be required to lay out upon any thing more than is fitting, and shall have reasonable time allowed, even for that. I need not say, that both to qualify yourselves for pressing them to present, and on many other accounts, you must take effectual care, that nothing belonging to you be presentable. Else they will have a ready answer for you: and it will be a sad thing to stand in awe and be at the mercy of those, who ought to reverence you. If you cannot prevail on them otherwise, I apprehend you may join with them; and if you cannot prevail on them at all, I apprehend you may present without them, in the case of repairs, as well as offences, by virtue of the interpretation, which practice hath put on the above-mentioned canon: though it speaks, I own, expressly of nothing besides offences. But in doing either of these things, you must be sure to observe the cautions given under the former head.

Yet after all, I am well aware, that you may often have great difficulties to encounter, possibly sometimes too great to surmount, and to diminish them for you, I have endeavoured to procure a parochial visitation from the archdeacon, which he hath promised. But then, for the credit of your parishioners and your own, let this be an inducement to put things in good order, that he may find them so: not to leave them in bad order, that he may rectify them.

Another very useful institution, for these and many valuable purposes, was that of rural deans: which took place here before the Conquest, was kept up till the great Rebellion, was restored afterwards in several dioceses, and particularly in this by the admirable Bishop Fell*, was found not quite extinct, and was completely revived by the late excellent bishop of Gloucester †, in that county, and is preserved to this day in some parts of the nation besides. These deans, being chosen out of the resident parochial clergy, could inspect, with small trouble, the churches and parishes within their several narrow districts; and being bound to report what they found amiss, could do it with little or no offence. In the latter end of Queen Anne's, and the beginning of the late king's reign, the convocation made some progress towards the re-establishment and better regulation of this office. When that, or any other branch of discipline, may be the subject of public consideration again, is very uncertain. I should be very glad, with your approbation, to set it up once more amongst us, in such form as might be most beneficial and satisfactory: but contented at present with hinting the matter, I leave and recommend it to your serious thoughts.

A third particular, of considerable importance, in which you are jointly concerned with the churchwardens, is the keeping of the register-book. The seventh canon directs, that it be of parchment: and though an act of parliament, lately passed, allows marriages to be registered in a paper book; yet parchment is far more durable: nor is the difference of expence worth regarding, as it returns so seldom. This book should be strongly bound, and not over-large; lest it should be worn and damaged, before it is filled.

* Kennet, Paroch. Ant. p. 653. † Bishop Benson.

For the safe preservation of it, and doubtless of all preceding books of the same kind, the canon orders, that a chest be provided with three locks and keys; one for you, one for each of the churchwardens, who are ordinarily two; and that on Sundays, if there hath been any christening, marriage, or burial, in the week before, it shall be entered there. I am afraid it is seldom thus kept; and yet there would be no great trouble in it, after a little use. Or where that is otherwise, either the minister or a churchwarden should keep it: and each of them should see from time to time, how it is kept. The entries, if they cannot well be made every Sunday, should be made very frequently, and in the mean time the minister, if he hath not the book, should take memorandums. He is the person directed to write in it, and usually much the fittest. But if, through any accident that happens not to be so, he should appoint a proper person, and superintend him. The names and surnames of the parents ought to be added, in registering not only baptisms, where it is enjoined, but marriages and burials too, as far as may be: for it may prevent doubts and disputes. It will also be very useful, to put down the day of the birth and death of each person, as well as of the baptism and burial. The late act above-mentioned hath directed farther, that every page of the register of marriages be numbered, to discover if any leaf be afterwards cut out: and ruled with lines at equal distances, to discover if any article be afterwards put in. And you will do very well to observe the same precautions in registering baptisms and burials. When a page is filled, the canon requires the minister and churchwardens to subscribe their names; which they should do just below the last line. And if this be not done immediately, it

may without any inconvenience be done soon after: and was done by me and the churchwardens, for many years, in one of the most populous parishes of the kingdom. Lastly the canon requires, that an attested copy of this book be annually transmitted to the bishop's registry, received without fee, and faithfully preserved there: and it authorizes me to proceed against those, who are negligent about any of its directions. I must therefore both intreat and insist, that you inquire in what condition your old and your present register-books are, and get them kept for the future as they ought. I have more than once been put under great difficulties in ordinations, for want of exactness in the register of baptisms. That of marriages is of so great concern, that altering it designedly to establish or void a marriage is by the act above-mentioned made felony. In all cases the book, faithfully kept, is good evidence: and falsifying it, is punishable at common law. I would only observe farther on this head, that in the preamble of a bill, which passed the House of Commons this last session, and had a second reading in the House of Lords, it was asserted as notorious, that "great inconveniences "have arisen from the present defective manner, in "which parochial registers are formed, and the loose "and uncertain method, in which they are kept and "preserved; whereby the evidence of descents is "frequently lost and rendered precarious." So far as this may be fact it will be most for our honour to amend it, without the interposition of the legislature.

A fourth point, of which I hope you will think yourselves bound, if not by law, yet in conscience, to take a joint care with the churchwardens, is that of parochial charities. The minister is the representative of the church, entrusted with its interests; and

you ought to endeavour, that such benefactions be first preserved and then applied in a proper manner.

If it be doubtful, whether such or such a donation hath been given to your church or poor, or the support of a school in your parish, you will make proper enquiry concerning the matter. If it be given by any writing, you will procure that writing, or an attested copy of it, to be laid up safely, either in the parish chest, or the bishop's registry; indeed a copy in each place would be best; and an account of the gift should be inserted in your parish book. For if deeds are left in private hands, and especially without authentic notice where they are left, they are sometimes designedly suppressed: and often undesignedly destroyed or lost, through the ignorance or carelessness of the persons possessed of them. It will also be very proper, to have a table mentioning the charity, hung up in your church, that a grateful remembrance of the benefactors may be continued to posterity, and others incited to follow their good example; as a paper of directions drawn up by the lower House of Convocation in 1710, hath well expressed it *. If the benefaction be an estate vested in trustees, it will be very material to get the trust renewed in due time: else in all likelihood there will be expence, if not danger; and to trustees of as good credit and ability, as possible. They must likewise be warned, never to let out such lands in long leases, or at very low rents, in favour of any body: but to raise the rents when they can; at least to vary them, which will make it easy to raise them, when there is opportunity: otherwise it will soon be pretended, that they have no right to raise them; of which there are some unhappy instances in this diocese. If the gift be in money, you

* See Wilkins, vol. iv. p. 638.

must press to have it placed in the public funds, in case it be considerable enough; or else in the best private hands, and on the best security that can be obtained: paying no regard in such cases to personal friendships; and being particularly careful that parish-officers do not keep it in their own custody. If they do, the interest will usually be paid out of the public money, and most probably the principal will be lost in a few years.

But charities are preserved in vain, unless they are well applied; and they are often sadly misapplied. Gifts to the church, where it is not otherwise expressed, must be supposed intended for beautifying the church: else it would be never the better for such gifts: for it will be equally repaired without them; the parishioners are bound to that: and the chief of the burden usually falls upon the richest, for whose relief charities were certainly not intended. And yet such benefactions are too commonly employed, not only in mere repairs, but in what hath no connection with the fabric; in providing bread and wine for the communion, in paying churchwardens' bills for all sorts of things, it may be for extravagant and riotous entertainments amongst the rest, in easing the poor's rates, in I know not what; and the church all the time, instead of being any way improved, suffered to grow dirty and even ruinous. A lamentable abuse of this kind (where a steeple fell down, and was in part rebuilt by contribution, while an estate, more than sufficient to have kept the whole building in good order and beauty, was perverted to other uses) I have taken much pains to rectify, but fear it is not thoroughly rectified yet. Again, gifts to the poor were certainly intended for the benefit of the poor; to make provision for such of them as are not on

the parish-list, or a better provision for such as are. And yet they are sometimes embezzled and squandered, in a great measure, if not wholly; sometimes bestowed to serve private or party purposes: and very frequently sunk into the legal rate: so the wealthy are benefited; and the needy have not a farthing more, than if nothing had been given for them.

I know it is not always easy, perhaps not always possible for you, to remedy these ill practices. But a real part of the blame will be laid on you, right or wrong, unless you try to remedy them. And it may prove less difficult than you imagine. Churchwardens and overseers perhaps are ignorant, or going on thoughtlessly, and would be thankful to you for good advice: or however would be ruled by it, on your representing to them the heinousness of robbing God or the poor; and the consolation it will afford them, to have put things into a right channel. Or supposing them backward to comply, you may be able to get considerable persons in the parish or neighbourhood to second you. At least you will get the reputation of a most laudable zeal, and if you conduct that zeal aright, of discretion also: and these together may produce unexpected success; especially where the abuse is not yet become inveterate. But if nothing else will do, and the case be plain, and the object of sufficient importance: recourse should be had to the authority of the law: and you should be willing to bear a proportion of the charges, if it be requisite, and you are able; only taking the strictest care to proceed with mildness and fairness.

I have now finished the course of directions to you, which I began fifteen years ago. And as I can truly say, that in this and every part of my behaviour as your bishop, I have, through the Divine assistance,

diligently laboured to do my duty with uprightness, and promote your good and that of your parishioners, present and future; so I hope you will accept my endeavours with candour, and study to profit by them; excusing my failings, which I know have been many, and will now be too likely to increase. I am advancing apace into the decline of age. Three of my brethren *, my oldest and best friends, have gone before me in less than twelve months. I must expect to follow them soon. Whether I may live, or, if I live, whether I may be able, to meet you thus again, God only can foresee. May he grant us to meet in a better world!

But before I conclude, permit me to subjoin to these general admonitions, a few words concerning two particular occurrences.

In the first place I return you my hearty thanks for the pains which you have taken in behalf of the Society for Propagating the Gospel. The collection hath upon the whole been made very successfully throughout the kingdom; and amounts to almost 19,000*l.* if not more: whereas ten years ago it fell short of 15,000*l.* But I believe the contribution of this county had been in proportion the largest of any. The last time it was barely 300*l.* nor was that to be accounted small: and now it is very near 500*l.* I mean in both cases exclusive of the university; which distinguished itself very honourably then, and I doubt not, will at present. May God increase, and bless, and reward, the zeal of all his servants every where for supporting and enlarging the kingdom of his Son, and making the confession of his name effectual to the salvation of mankind.

The other subject, on which I would speak to you,

* Bishops Butler, Benson, and Berkley.

is the contest about representatives for this county in the next parliament. Let no one be alarmed. I need not, and I do not mean, to give you at a meeting of this nature, my opinion which of the candidates you ought to prefer: of that I say no more here than that you ought to regard, in the first place, the inseparable interests of the excellent church we are members of, and, its only human support, the just and gracious government we live under; than other subordinate considerations. My purpose is merely to exhort you *(and I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation*)*, that on this occasion, *your conversation be such as becometh the Gospel of Christ:* in doing which, I have neither one party nor one person amongst you, more in my view than another: but if I may use the Apostle's words, *am jealous with a godly jealousy over you all* †. I cannot indeed suppose, that any of you would be guilty of the grosser faults too common at such times, or any wilful wrong behaviour. But in the midst of so many clashings, provocations, and disappointments, as will happen, so many mistakes and misrepresentations as arise one knows not how: the incitements to uncharitable and contemptuous thoughts, to unadvised and injurious words, in anger or in mirth, nay to unkind and hard and even unjust actions, are very great, and the best of us all should be continually suggesting to our minds proper cautions for avoiding these dangers. Else we shall fall into sin against God and our neighbour: we shall lose the esteem of part of those whose improvement by us depends on their esteeming us; and set a bad instead of a good example to the rest. Let every one of us therefore be very watchful over our conduct: or if we have not been so, let us amend

* Heb. xiii. 22. † 2 Cor. xi. 2.

it: and if we find preserving our innocence difficult, let us meddle the less with these matters: for indeed being overy-busy about them is not very suitable to our function. But while we are strict with ourselves, let us be very mild in regard to others, whom we think to have done amiss: we may blame them without cause; or if we do not, it is easy to err; and we, amongst others, are sadly liable to faults. But let us be especially mild towards our own brethren. For why should we diminish our little remaining strength by intestine dissensions, and teach yet more persons to think ill or meanly of us, than do already? Surely the common cause of religion and virtue, which we are jointly intrusted to support, should have infinitely greater force to unite us, than any thing else to divide us.

Next to yourselves, you will study to preserve as many of your parishioners as possible, from the sins *that so easily beset them* at these seasons of epidemical unreasonableness and licentiousness. Those, who are of your own side, you may counsel and reprove more freely. With the rest you must be extremely calm and patient: take the most favourable opportunities, and use the most persuasive methods of speaking: but in some way or other, private or public, all, who need it, should be told, *whether they will bear, or whether they will forbear*, that the great Christian laws of dutifulness to superiors, mutual goodwill, forbearance, forgiveness, equity, veracity, moderation, sobriety, lose not the least of their obligation during the continuance of these disputes: that all virtues are to be chiefly exercised, when they are chiefly tried: and that therefore now more particularly, you, as the Apostle directs, must *put them in mind*, and they must keep in mind, *to be subject to*

principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men *. I end this long discourse in the words of the same Apostle: *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are venerable* (for so the word is rightly translated in the margin), *whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think of* and do *these things: and the God of peace shall be with you* †.

* Tit. iii. 1, 2. † Phil. iv. 8, 9.

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF CANTERBURY,

IN THE YEAR 1758.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

THE Disposer of all things having permitted his Majesty, by the advice of his faithful servants, to nominate me for your bishop: though I saw many reasons to dread this promotion, arising from the difficulties of the office and of the times, from the great qualities of my predecessors, and my own increasing weaknesses; yet I thought myself bound to obey his commands, and with the same gratitude for his favourable opinion, as if I had wished to receive them: determining, through God's grace, to perform the duties of my station as well as I could; and hoping for the candour, the assistance, and the prayers of good people. To make some amends by diligence for my deficiencies in other respects, I resolved immediately to visit my diocese: for which purpose we are here assembled.

These meetings were designed, partly to give the

clergy opportunities of conferring with each other, and consulting their superiors, on matters relating to their profession; and I am very desirous, that you should render them as beneficial in this way, as possible: but principally, to give bishops opportunities of exhorting and cautioning their clergy, either on such general subjects as are always useful, or on such particular occasions as the circumstances of things, or the inquiries, made at or against these times, point out; and of interposing their authority, if there be need; which amongst you, I am persuaded, there will not. To provide more fully for your instruction, I have ordered a charge to be sent you, which I delivered to the clergy of Oxfordshire, and printed at their request, about twenty years ago. Would to God it were become unseasonable now. But as unhappily it is not, I earnestly recommend the contents of it to your most serious thoughts: and would have you look on what I shall at persent say further, as supplemental to it.

Counsels and admonitions to parochial ministers presuppose their residence. The founders of parishes provided them with glebes, and built houses for them, purposely that they might reside. The laws of the church have from the beginning, and do still require, as indeed common equity doth, that this valuable consideration, for which these endowments were given, should be faithfully paid. And going over and performing the service from time to time, or engaging some other clergyman to take care of it, or of the occasional part of it, seldom answers the original intention. Your people will not so readily, and cannot so conveniently, apply to the minister of another parish: and when they do, his assistance, for the most part, will be less early, or less constant, than

it should: though doubtless they, who have undertaken to supply their neighbours' absence, ought to do it very conscientiously. But besides even the Sunday duty, when the incumbent unnecessarily comes from a distant place to do it, will be considered as accompanied with something like a breach of the Sunday, will not always be kept to the stated hours, will often be hurried over indecently: the catechism will either not be taught or not expounded, if the distance be at all considerable; nor probably will the sermon be well adapted to the audience. For it is only living amongst your people, and knowing them thoroughly, that can shew you, what is level to their capacities, and suited to their circumstances; what will reform their faults, and improve their hearts in true goodness. Yet this is your business with them: and unless you perform it, every thing else is nothing. Further, such as want your help most may not come to your sermons, or may not apply them to their own case, or may need to have them enforced by considerations peculiar to themselves, and unfit to be specified in public. Speaking to them separately, and agreeably to their several states of mind and life, may have unforeseen influence. And being always at hand, to order the disorderly, and countenance the well-behaved, to advise and comfort the diseased and afflicted, to relieve or procure relief for the necessitous, to compose little differences, and discourage wrong customs in the beginning, to promote friendly offices, and keep up an edifying and entertaining conversation in a neighbourhood, must add incredible weight to public instruction.

Indeed your congregations expect these things from you, and have a right to expect them. The nature of your office requires them: you have all at your ordi-

nation expressly promised to *use both public and private monitions and exhortations, both to the sick and whole within your cures, as need shall require and occasion be given, the Lord being your helper.* Now we cannot use them duly, without being resident. But further still, since their ordination, all vicars have sworn particularly to be resident unless they are dispensed with, which means by lawful authority: nor doth any dispensation of a bishop last beyond his own time; or beyond the term for which he gave it; or, if that were indefinite, beyond his pleasure: points, which vicars ought to consider much more seriously than they often do. And every rector hath sworn in general to *obey* his bishop *in all things lawful and honest.* Now surely residence is lawful and honest: and what is punishable by a bishop may, if done without his leave, be well interpreted disobedience to him: and the non-residence of rectors is punishable just in the same manner with that of vicars.

It must not therefore be pleaded, that however necessary the residence of some minister may be, that of a curate may suffice. For your engagement is not merely that the several duties of your parish shall be done, but that you personally will do them: and if it were enough to substitute another to do them, a layman would be, in point of reason and conscience, as capable of holding a benefice, as a man in holy orders. Besides, a curate will usually have less knowledge and less experience, than the incumbent: and he and the parishioners will conceive, that they are less related to each other. He will consider himself, as being with them only for an uncertain, and he may hope, a short time; which will tempt him to neglect them. And they will consider him,

as not the person, who hath authority over them; which will tempt them to disregard him: especially as the largest salary, that can be legally appointed, or generally afforded to a curate, will not enable him to recommend himself to them by doing good amongst them in any expensive way: whilst yet the people will think, and justly too, that the whole income of the benefice was intended to procure them a minister, to do them as much good in every way, as could reasonably be expected from it.

There are indeed cases, in which the law dispenses with holding two livings, and by consequence allows absence from one. But persons ought to consider well: supposing they can with innocence take the benefit of that law; whether they can do it on other terms, than their dispensation and their bond expresses, of preaching yearly thirteen sermons, and keeping two months' hospitality, in the parish where they reside least. For the leave given them on these conditions, is not intended to be given them, however legally valid, if the conditions are neglected: always excepting where just impediments happen. There are likewise cases, in which the non-residence of persons, who have only one living, is permitted by law. But some of these also are put under limitations, beyond which the permission doth not reach.

Further still, I am sensible, that considerations of health and strength, and particular circumstances of incumbents or their families, require leave of absence to be sometimes allowed, where the law makes no allowance, But then it should never be taken for any considerable time, without being asked: nor should it be asked without good cause. And mere fancy, or desire of living more at ease, or in a cheerfuller, and, it may be, less clerical manner, is by no means a sufficient cause. Nor indeed is the allegation of health

to be urged too far, or to be too much regarded. For places, called unwholesome, prove upon trial very wholesome to many persons: and those, which are least so, must have some ministers in or near them; and whom rather, generally speaking, than such as enjoy the whole profits? Much less is indulgence to be granted for every present convenience, or prospect of temporal advantage: which if clergymen appear to have greatly at heart, and the care of their parishes but little, indeed it looks very ill.

Another plea may be offered by some, that though they live not on their own cures, they serve others. And it is not always an insufficient one. But, with very few exceptions, the most natural and most useful method by far is, that each take the oversight of the parish, which properly belongs to him: and absenting himself from that, for a little more income, a little more agreeableness, or any slight reason, is unbecoming and unwarrantable behaviour.

At the same time I acknowledge, that the poorness of some benefices makes the residence of a distinct minister upon each of them impracticable: and therefore they must be served from an adjoining parish, or a greater distance; and no more duty expected, than there is a competent provision for. But then I fear, indeed I have found, that in some benefices, not so poor, one minister supplies two churches on a Sunday; contrary to a repeated injunction of successive archbishops to their suffragans, which they certainly designed to observe themselves; and the words of which are these; *that you do not allow any minister to serve more than one church or chapel in one day, except that chapel be a member of the parish church; or united thereunto; and unless the said church or chapel be not able to maintain a curate.* The consequence of disregarding this injunction

is, not only the very bad one, that the service is performed in irreverent haste, but that catechising is neglected in both places, if not altogether, yet in a great degree. Nay, perhaps for great part of the year, if not the whole, each of them hath prayers but once. Where indeed it can be truly alleged in this last case, that the inhabitants of each parish not only with convenience may, but actually do attend at both churches, the plea must be allowed its weight. But, as to other excuses: If the number of the people be small, the service is not less enjoined, and is more easily performed: if they had rather have a sermon at another church, than merely prayers at their own; they ought to have more than prayers; an exposition of the catechism, which they will account equivalent to a sermon: or you may reduce it with ease into the form of a sermon: and then many of them will come to their own church, who now go to no other, but profane the rest of the day: if they are content with part of the Sunday service, which however may be said or believed without sufficient ground, yet probably they would be glad of the whole. But supposing them to be indifferent about it, or even averse from it, their minister is bound to shew them, that they ought not. And how long soever this hath been the practice; if it ought not to have been so at all, the longer the worse. My pious and learned predecessor, Archbishop Potter, lamented heavily to me the irregularities of this kind, which he found in this diocese: and if any remain, I must, after his example, endeavour to have them rectified.

I hope they will be rectified by the best method beyond comparison; your own serious reflections on what you owe to your flocks, and what you owe to the great Shepherd of souls. Though you are ever so

expressly permitted by human laws to be absent from your cures, or by your ordinary to serve them, or let them be served, by halves; you are answerable to an infinitely higher tribunal for what God, and not man alone, hath made your duty. Therefore, if you regard the peace of your own souls and your final comfort, you will never do any of these things, unless very strong reasons oblige you to it: and you will never be glad of such reasons, but heartily sorry. You will give your parishes both morning and evening prayer, wherever it is possible: and you will supply them in person, unless particular circumstances render it impracticable, or unless, by living at a distance for the present, you are more useful to religion some other way, and peculiarly qualified for that usefulness. Far from catching at weak pretences, you will rather be diffident about strong inducements: and much readier to follow the directions, than solicit the indulgence, of your superiors. But if any do choose the worst part, they must remember, that we bishops are bound to oppose, instead of consulting their inclination, from concern for them, as well as their parishioners. And therefore you will not surely think it real good-nature to connive at liberties of this kind presumptuously taken without leave, or to grant requests made for them, as matters of course: nor impute it to a fondness of exercising power, when compliance with the rules of the church is required: nor yet hastily condemn it, as partial behaviour, if an indulgence, denied to one, is granted to another; for there may be, in the cases of different persons, considerable disparities, unknown to you, or unobserved by you.

But when it is ever so clear, that the non-residence of ministers ought to be allowed, it is at least equally

clear, that they should use their best endeavours to make their people amends for it. One thing, proper to be done for this end, is relieving their poor: which as they could not with decency avoid doing, according to their ability, if they lived amongst them, they ought to do more largely, if they live elsewhere. For no reproach will lie heavier on our order, than that of reaping all, and sowing nothing: whereas, they who give alms in their absence, will be in effect always present to one valuable purpose; will be readily presumed to be well-wishers to their parishes in every way; whilst they are benefactors to them in this way: and by such a specimen of the influence of religion upon themselves, will remind their congregations, very acceptably, of the influence, which it ought to have upon them; especially if they make their charity more directly subservient to religion, by affording distinguished encouragement to pious and virtuous persons, and those who appear likely to be made such: by procuring children to be instructed in their Christian duty, and other proper knowledge; by distributing useful books amongst the needy and ignorant. What is thus bestowed, is of all the service it can be: whereas injudicious bounty may even produce harm.

Another thing, incumbent on such as cannot reside constantly, is to inspect however the state of their parishes as frequently as they can: spending days or weeks, or longer seasons there occasionally; and in proportion as their time is shorter, using more diligence in public and private instructions and warnings. For they are peculiarly bound to do what they are able, who are not able to do what else they ought. But if even this be out of their power, they may at least be assiduous in getting information

from persons of understanding and seriousness, in or near their cures, with what regularity, with what spirit and zeal, each part of the parochial duty is performed; whether true inward piety makes any progress; whether any and what abuses and neglects are crept in. And he who reckons it enough, that for aught he knows to the contrary, his parishioners go on like their neighbours, hath by no means the requisite concern for their souls, or his own.

But whenever absence is necessary, or the largeness of a parish, or the infirmity of a minister, hinders him from taking the whole care of it personally, the principal point is the choice of a fit substitute, to be employed in his stead, or share his burthen: for no superintendency will make an unfit one answer the end. And therefore I charge it upon your consciences, not to suffer cheapness, recommendation of friends, affection to this or that person or place of education, in short any inducement whatever to weigh near so much with you, as the benefit of your people, in choosing persons to serve your churches. For on you the choice of them lies in the first place: but not on you alone. The laws of the church require particularly, canon 48, that *no curate or minister be permitted to serve in any place, without examination and admission of the ordinary:* in consequence of which, one of the before-mentioned archiepiscopal directions, to the suffragans of the province, is this: *That you make diligent enquiry concerning curates in your diocese: and proceed to ecclesiastical censures against those who shall presume to serve cures, without being first duly licensed thereunto; as also against all incumbents, who shall receive and employ them without obtaining such licence.* Yet I would avoid rigour in all cases. The expence of a licence, by means of the stamps,

may to some be rather inconvenient, and greater than the government perhaps intended: at least, if they are likely to remove, and so repeat that expence, in a short time. And such curates I would excuse: only desiring them to consider, what security of continuing in their station, and receiving their salary, a licence brings them. But then you cannot think it right, that I should be left in ignorance, who serves a church under my care, till I learn it by accident, or private inquiry, perhaps many months after; through which omission, men of bad characters, men not in orders, may intrude; as there hath lately been a flagrant instance in this diocese. I am far from looking on the past failures of giving notice, as designed negligence of your flocks, or disrespect to your superiors. But I shall have cause both to think of them and treat them as such, if continued, after the warning, which I now give, that no one is to officiate statedly, or employ another to officiate so, within my jurisdiction, unless he first obtain my consent; or what in effect will be mine, that of your very worthy and vigilant archdeacon. Think not, I beg you, that this is taking more on myself than my predecessors did. Their own directions prove, that they would have done the same thing, if they had seen the same necessity. Far be it from me to *lord it over God's heritage* *: but I am bound to *keep that which is committed to my trust* †.

When you want curates, I recommend it to you, first to enquire after persons of merit, already ordained, and if possible ordained priests, taking care to see their orders, as well as to examine into their characters, before you think of granting nominations to others. The number of clergymen indeed is rather

* 1 Peter v. 3. † 1 Tim. vi. 20.

deficient, than superfluous. But still one would not add to it by overlooking undeservedly those who are of it already. And particularly where help is wanted only for a short time, I shall insist on this point: nor will, without absolute necessity, ordain any one upon such a title. And if fraudulent titles are brought, merely to procure orders, as I hope I shall discover them soon enough to disallow them, so I shall be sure to remark and remember, who hath attempted to impose upon me by them.

The next thing to be considered in relation to curates is, their testimonials. And here the canon and directions already quoted, enjoin that no bishop *admit such as remove out of another diocese to serve in his, without the testimony in writing of the bishop of that diocese, or ordinary of the peculiar jurisdiction, from whence they come, of their good life, ability, and conformity to the ecclesiastical laws of the church of England.* For the clergymen of one diocese, or jurisdiction, at least their hand-writing, being usually unknown to the bishop of another, he can seldom, of himself, be sure, either that he hath their genuine testimony, or how far he may trust it. Therefore it is fit, that he should desire the attestation of their proper superior. And even to this it will be prudent to add such further information, as can be got: considering how very carelessly testimonials are sometimes granted, even by reputable persons.

But let me intreat you never to be guilty of such carelessness yourselves, for whatever purpose one is asked of you. Both the nature of the thing, and the directions repeatedly mentioned, require, that no bishop *accept any letters testimonial, unless it be declared by those who shall sign them, that they have personally known,* not only the man, but *his life and con-*

versation, for the time by them certified; and do believe in their conscience, that he is qualified for that order, office, or employment, which he desires. Now testimonials concerning such things as these, cannot be matter of mere form, unless our whole profession be a very empty form. We, the bishops to whom they are given, do not, and must not, understand them to be so: it would be absurd to demand them if we did. Some customs indeed may grow to be things of course: the reasons for them ceasing, or not being thought of moment; and yet the law for them continuing. But the reasons for testimonials can never cease, or be thought of small moment. They are the only ordinary information that we have, in a case of the utmost importance, in which we have a right to be informed. For no one can imagine, that we are to ordain and employ whoever comes, or depend on clandestine intelligence. We must therefore depend on regular testimonials. And if they be untrue, we are most injuriously deceived by them: and all the mischiefs, that follow from thence, will sit heavy one day on the deceivers. But, even exclusively of this great consideration, would you be chargeable with declaring a deliberate falsehood under your hand? Would you have unworthy men fill ecclesiastical stations and exclude their betters? Would you have your bishop reproached, and your order vilified, through your fault? If not; remember, how utterly inconsistent with all concern for religion, with all veracity, probity and prudence, it is, to sign testimonials at random; how lamentable a sort of clergy it will produce; how dreadful an encouragement to wickedness and profaneness it will prove. Remember also, that you express in these instruments, not what you charitably hope a person will be; but what

you actually know he hath been: not what others tell you at the end of the time, for which you vouch; but what you have seen and heard through the course of it: so that, if for a considerable part of the three years commonly specified, you have seen and heard nothing of him, for that part you can certify nothing about him. And remember, lastly, that though the affirmation of a person's having lived piously, soberly and honestly, comprehends a great deal, yet the concluding article, your belief of his fitness for what he desires, implies a great deal more. For let him be ever so good and even learned a man, he cannot be fit for a clergyman and the care of a parish, without competent gravity and discretion, and a voice and a manner suitable to a public assembly: of all which things they, that had some familiarity with him, are usually the best, if not the only judges. This part of the testimonial therefore is highly necessary: and every part of it must be well considered, before it is given; and no regard paid to neighbourhood, acquaintance, friendship, compassion, importunity, when they stand in competition with truth.

It may sometimes be hard for you to refuse your hand to improper persons. But it is only one of the many hardships, which conscience bids men undergo resolutely, when they are called to them. It would be much harder, that your bishop should be misled, the church of God injured, and the poor wretch himself assisted to invade sacrilegiously an office, at the thought of which he hath cause to tremble. And if you fear he will be revenged on you for not yielding to him, this furnishes an additional reason for denying him: for will you, or can you, say of such a one, that he is qualified to be a minister of the Gospel any where? But if the persons, to whom candidates

apply, would only make it a rule to meet, and act jointly on the occasion, and keep secret the particulars of what passed, it might be unknown from whom the denial proceeded. Or suppose it known, the resentment of such, as deserve to be refused, will seldom do a worthy man much hurt: and a number of such refusals will do the public unspeakable good. Indeed the expectation of a refusal's following upon wrong behaviour will in a great degree prevent such behaviour, and turn this whole difficulty into a pleasure. But what is unavoidable with innocence, must be virtuously borne: and instead of submitting to recommend unfit persons, you ought, if others recommend them, which God forbid, to interpose immediate cautions against the danger, in all flagrant cases. Still, not every past fault, nor every present infirmity, should be alleged, or allowed, as an impediment. But into an office, the most important of all others, none should be admitted, who are void of the proper spirit, or a competent share of the needful qualifications for it: and the less, because, though we can refuse to ordain them, we often cannot keep them back from very unsuitable stations, when once they are ordained.

After presenting the title and testimonials, whether for orders, a curacy, or a living, follows the examination. For though the testimonial expresses an opinion that the person is qualified; which may be very useful, to restrain such from applying as are notoriously unqualified: yet we bishops must not, especially in the case of orders, rest on a mere opinion; but assure ourselves by a closer trial, whether he hath sufficient knowledge of religion and the Holy Scriptures to teach them in public, and apply them in private, and defend them against opposers: the two first

of which are absolutely necessary; the third highly requisite. As therefore, on the one hand, I hope I never have been or shall be over-strict in this respect, and rejecting candidates will give me almost, if not quite as much concern, as it can give them; so on the other, I must adhere to my duty; against all solicitations of friends, and all intreaties of the parties concerned, who little think what they do, when they press into such an employment prematurely. I shew my regard to you, when I exclude unqualified persons out of your number: and I shall never doubt your candid interpretation of my conduct; nor indeed your zeal to vindicate it, when you are acquainted with my reasons, which any of you shall, who hath cause to ask them. But that no injustice may be done to those whom I postpone, any more than to myself; I beseech you to consider, and, if needful, to say in their behalf, that though deficient in knowledge, they may have a goodness of heart, more valuable than the highest knowledge; though not qualified yet, they may be soon; may already have made a good progress, though not a sufficient one; may indeed have more learning on the whole, than many who are admitted, only not have applied themselves enough to theological learning.

Examination must occasionally be repeated after persons have been ordained. The 39th canon requires it before institution to benefices: therefore surely it is advisable also before admission to curacies. A man, who was fit to be ordained, may have become since, through negligence, or bodily indisposition affecting his mind, unfit to be employed: or he may be capable still of what he was ordained for, but not of what he applies for: or his ordainer, though ever so duly careful, may sometimes have mistaken, or

been misinformed: and if he hath chanced to be too indulgent, the bad effects of his indulgence ought to be prevented. Accordingly re-examination is common. My brethren the bishops, I am sure, will not blame me for using it: and I trust, you my brethren will not.

When a curate nominated hath been examined and approved, the next step is, to appoint him a salary. And here I am very sensible, that what is far from a comfortable maintenance for life, may however be a tolerable competency at first: and likewise, that some benefices are so mean, and some incumbents in such low circumstances, or burthened with so numerous families, that they must be excused, if they endeavour to get help on as easy terms as they well can. But if any minister, who hath either a large preferment, or two moderate ones, or a plentiful temporal income, tries to make a hard bargain with his brother, whom he employs; and is more solicitous to give the smallest salary possible, than to find the worthiest person; it is matter of severe and just reproach: the friends of the clergy will be scandalized at it: their enemies will take dreadful advantages of it: indeed the people in general, if we think a trifle enough for him that doth the work, will be apt to conceive it very needless, that he, who doth little or nothing, should have a great deal more. For this reason therefore, amongst incomparably weightier ones, it concerns you much, both to labour diligently, and to allow liberally. Accordingly I hope I shall never have the disagreeable office thrown upon me of augmenting what is proposed, but the satisfaction given me of confirming and applauding it.

But besides making a reasonable allowance, the minister of a parish ought to provide, with the kindest

attention in all respects, for the convenience and accommodation, the credit and influence, of his curate: who is bound in return to consult faithfully the minister's honour and interest in every thing: but above all, to be unwearied in that best proof of his gratitude, a conscientious care of the souls committed to him; not proportioning his diligence to the poor recompense paid him here, but to the unspeakable happiness reserved for good shepherds hereafter.

Indeed whether the principal, or his representative, or both reside, their industry and fervency and prudence will be the measure of their people's benefit, and their own final acceptance. **If you content yourselves with a languid formal recital of stated offices, and by indolence, or amusements, or business, or even studies, are lost to your parishioners, while you are in the midst of them, or by indiscretions in conversation, dress, or demeanor, become disliked or despised by them, you may in respect of any spiritual** usefulness to them or yourselves, be, almost as well, perhaps better, ever so far off. But this is no excuse for being absent, but only a reason for being present to good purpose. And as the non-residence of some, the unactive residence of others, and the offensive conduct of a third sort, (which cause great sorrow, but moderate complaints, amongst wise and good people,) are favourite topics of invective against us, not only in the mouths of irreligious persons, but of a new sect pretending to the strictest piety; though we are bound always, we are peculiarly bound at present, to behave in so exemplary a manner, as will *cut off occasion from them which desire occasion to glory* * of themselves, and speak evil of us. It is not *rendering* to them *railing for railing* †: it is not ridi-

* 2 Cor. xi. 12. † 1 Pet. iii. 9.

culing them, especially in terms bordering on profaneness, or affecting more gravely to hold them in contempt; it is not doing them the honour of miscalling other persons of more than ordinary seriousness by their name, that will prevent the continuance or the increase of the harm, which they are doing. The only way is, for the clergy to imitate and emulate what is good in them, avoiding what is bad: to attend their cures, edify their parishioners with awakening, but rational and scriptural, discourses, converse much with them as *watchmen for their souls* *; *be sober, grave, temperate, and shew themselves in all things patterns of good works* †. If the people see, or but imagine, their minister unwilling to take more pains about them, or preserve more guard upon himself than for shame he must, no wonder if it alienates them powerfully both from him and his doctrine: whereas when they perceive him careful to instruct them, and go before them, in whatever is their duty to do, they will hearken to him with great regard, when he cautions them against overdoing; and be unlikely to seek for imaginary improvements abroad from irregularities and extravagancies, whilst they experience themselves really improved at home in an orderly established method.

But then, to improve them effectually to their future happiness, as well as to silence false accusers, you must be assiduous in teaching the principles, not only of virtue and natural religion, but of the Gospel: and of the Gospel, not as almost explained away by modern refiners, but *as the truth is in Jesus* ‡; as it is taught by the church, of which you are members; as you have engaged by your subscriptions and de-

* Heb. xiii. 17. † Tit. ii. 2. 7.

‡ Eph. iv. 21.

clarations, that you will teach it yourselves. You must preach to them faith in the ever-blessed Trinity; and vindicate, when it is requisite, those parts of our creeds and offices which relate to that article, from the very unjust imputations of absurdity and uncharitableness which have been cast upon them. You must set forth the original corruption of our nature: our redemption, *according to God's eternal purpose in Christ* *, by the sacrifice of the cross; our sanctification by the influences of the divine Spirit; the insufficiency of our own good works, and the efficacy of faith to salvation: yet handling these points in a doctrinal, not controversial manner, unless particularly called to it; and even then treating adversaries with mildness and pity, not with bitterness or immoderate vehemence.

The truth, I fear, is, that many, if not most of us, have dwelt too little on these doctrines in our sermons: by no means, in general, from disbelieving or slighting them; but partly from knowing, that formerly they had been inculcated beyond their proportion, and even to the disparagement of Christian obedience; partly from fancying them so generally received and remembered, that little needs to be said, but on social obligations; partly again from not having studied theology deeply enough, to treat of them ably and beneficially: God grant it may never have been for want of inwardly experiencing their importance. But whatever be the cause, the effect hath been lamentable. Our people have grown less and less mindful, first of the distinguishing articles of their creed, then, as will always be the case, of that one, which they hold in common with the heathens; have forgot in effect their Creator as well as their Re-

* Eph. iii. 11.

deemer and Sanctifier; seldom or never seriously worshipping him, or thinking of the state of their souls in relation to him; but flattering themselves, that what they are pleased to call a moral and harmless life, though far from being either, is the *one thing needful*. Reflections have been made upon us, of different natures, and with different views, on account of these things, by deists, by papists, by brethren of our own, which it is easy to shew have been much too severe. But the only complete vindication of ourselves will be to preach fully and frequently the doctrines, which we are unjustly accused of casting off or undervaluing: yet so, as to reserve always a due share of our discourses, which it is generally reported some of our censurers do not, for the common duties of common life, as did our Saviour and his Apostles. But then we must enforce them chiefly by motives peculiarly Christian: I will not say, only by such; for the Scripture adds others. And while we urge on our hearers the necessity of universal holiness, we must urge equally that of their *being found in Christ; not having their own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith* *.

Copious and interesting as the subject is, I must now conclude. And *I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation* †: for I have spoken to you from the simplicity of a plain heart, and the sincerity of a deep concern for the interests of the church of Christ, and the everlasting welfare of every one of you: not as condemning, not as disesteeming you, very far from it, but as being *jealous over you with godly jealousy*, and deeply affected with the present state of religion amongst us. Wickedness, pro-

* Phil. iii. 9. † Heb. xiii. 22.

faneness, avowed infidelity, have made a dreadful progress in this nation. The civil power, in most cases, doth little to check that progress; and it is an unhappiness in our most happy constitution, that it cannot easily, if at all, do what one might wish. Ecclesiastical authority is not only too much limited, but too much despised, as matters now stand amongst us, to do almost any thing to purpose. In the small degree, that it can be exerted usefully, I hope it will, and promise my utmost endeavours, in all cases notified to me, that it shall. But the main support of piety and morals consists in the parochial labours of the clergy. If our country is to be preserved from utter profligateness and ruin, it must be by our means: and, take notice, we cannot lose our influence, but in a great measure by our own fault. If we look on what we are apt to call our livings only as our livelihoods, and think of little more than living on the income of them according to our own inclinations: if, for want of *a good conscience or faith unfeigned* *, we forfeit the protection of God; and by worldliness, or indolence, or levity in behaviour, talk or appearance (for gross vices I put out of the question), lose, as we assuredly shall, the reverence of mankind: there will be no foundation left for us to stand upon. Our legal establishment will shake and sink under us, if once it can be said we do the public little service; and much sooner, if we are suspected of disquieting it. Wicked people will attack us without reserve; the good will be forced to condemn and give us up: and well would it be for us if this were the worst. *It is a small thing to be judged of man's judgment: he that judgeth us is the Lord* †. But while we teach the genuine truths of

* 1 Tim. i. 5. † 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

the Gospel, and evidently feel the truths we teach; and are more anxious about the souls of men, than our own profit, or pleasure, or power; while we submit ourselves dutifully und affectionately (as we never had greater cause) to the *King* and those *who are* put *in authority* under him; *lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty* *; and join to our piety and loyalty and virtue, but a common share of prudence; we shall, in spite of enemies, through his mercy, who hath promised to be *with us alway* †, not fail of being upheld. The religious will *esteem us very highly in love for our work's sake* ‡: the *wise in their generation* §, though not religious, will perceive our importance: the vicious and destitute of principle will be awed by us: and the seed of the word, however trampled under foot by some, will spring up and bear fruit in the hearts of many. Let us think then seriously, what depends on us, what it requires of us, *and give ourselves wholly to it* ‖. God hath placed us in a station of difficulty and labour, at present also of reproach and contempt from great numbers of men. But still, if we only learn to value our function justly, and love it sincerely, we shall be unspeakably happier in discharging the duties of it, than we possibly can be in any thing else. The things, in which the world places happiness, are very trifles. We may plainly see them to be such now, if we will: and we shall see in a little time, whether we will or not, that the only real point of moment is, to have approved ourselves *good and faithful servants* ¶ to our great Master. Let us all therefore bear in mind continually, how matters will

* 1 Tim. ii. 2. † Matt. xxviii. 20. ‡ 1 Thess. v. 13.
§ Luke xvi. 8. ‖ 1 Tim. iv. 15. ¶ Matt. xxv. 21.

appear to us then; and heartily pray and earnestly endeavour, *so to pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal. Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our Lord**.

* Collect, fourth Sunday after Trinity.

A

CHARGE

DISTRIBUTED TO THE

CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF CANTERBURY,

IN THE YEAR 1762.

[*The* ARCHBISHOP *being hindered by illness from visiting them in person.*]

REVEREND BRETHREN,

IT having pleased God that I should live to come amongst you a second time, I think it my duty to proceed with the same kind of exhortations, which I gave you at first. For though many subjects of instruction might be proper, there is peculiar propriety in those, which relate more immediately to your conduct: and though I might very justly give you, in general, praise instead of advice, yet they who deserve the most of the former, will be most desirous of the latter, knowing how much need of it the best of us have. And I hope the freedoms which I shall take with you in this respect, will the rather be pardoned, as I both permit and intreat you to use the same with me, when occasion requires it; being sincerely disposed, if I know myself, to set you an example of docility.

I began with your obligation to residence; and the appointment of curates, either to supply your absence when you could not reside, or to assist you when the work was too heavy for you. And then I entered a little into the common duties of incumbents and curates, in which I shall now make some further progress: more solicitous about the importance of directions, than the accuracy of method; and using no other apology, if I should happen to repeat what I have given you in charge already, than that of the Apostle: *To* say *the same things, to me is not grievous, and for you it is safe**.

The same Apostle's admonition to Timothy is, *Take heed unto thyself, and to the doctrine* †. The main point is what he begins with, the care of our temper and behaviour. For without that, our preaching will seldom be such as it ought, and scarce ever bring forth its proper fruits. Now a Christian temper consists of various parts: but the first impression, which a genuine faith in the Gospel makes on the soul, and the ruling principle, which it fixes there, is a deep sense of love to God and our fellow-creatures, producing an earnest desire, that we and they may be for ever happy in his presence. Whoever therefore is destitute of this feeling, ought not, though free from gross vices, to become a clergyman: and without obtaining it from the Giver of all good things by fervent prayer, no man is qualified to fill the place of one. For notwithstanding that he may preserve some *form of godliness*, without which he would be mischievous and shocking in the highest degree: yet not having the reality and *power thereof* ‡, he must profess, and seemingly attempt, to make others what he is far from being himself. Consequently his en-

* Phil. iii. 1. † 1 Tim. iv. 16. ‡ 2 Tim. iii. 5.

deavours out of the pulpit will be infrequent, reluctant, faint: and in it they will at best be unnatural and ungraceful, whatever pains he may take in his compositions, or whatever vehemence he may affect in his delivery. Hence he will be dissatisfied within, detected and disesteemed by the judicious part of his hearers, and of little use to the rest, if he is not even hurtful by misleading them. Or whatever his case may be amongst men, his inward want of the piety, which he outwardly pretends to, must render him uncommonly guilty in the sight of God. Heaven forbid, that I should have need to enlarge on such a character in this audience.

But have we not most of us cause to apprehend, that our religious principles, though sincere, are not sufficiently exerted; and therefore produce not the fruit, which they might? Do we not rather take it for granted, that we approve ourselves to be duly in earnest, than find, on impartial examination, that we do? No man should rashly say or surmise this of another: but every one should search home into it for himself. And we should attentively read the Scriptures, and the treatises written by wise and good men concerning the duties of God's ministers: to see if we are such as they describe, and stir up ourselves to become such as we ought.

Good inclinations, thus excited, will not fail, through the assistance of divine grace, of directing us into a suitable conduct. And were a man, who confessedly means well, to overdo a little sometimes, the rightness of his intention would plead his excuse very strongly. However, we should carefully avoid extremes, even on the better side: not give uncommanded demonstrations of our Christian zeal, when they will probably serve no good purpose, and be

deemed ostentation, or turned into ridicule, or provoke ill humour: but restrain, according as times and places and company may require, the sentiments which else we could be glad to utter. Only we must do this in such a manner, as not to tempt the most rigid professor of religion to imagine, or the most profligate enemy of it to suggest, that we have little or none: but shew our concern for it on every fit occasion, with full as much diligence, as we decline unfit ones. And here, I conceive, it is, that we of the clergy are chiefly apt to fail. We do not always appear in the common intercourses of life, sufficiently penetrated with the importance of our function, or sufficiently assiduous to promote the ends of our mission.

Too possibly a great part of our people may like the lukewarm amongst us the better for resembling themselves, and giving them no uneasiness on comparison, but seeming to authorize their indifference. But then, such of us can do them no good. Our example can teach them nothing beyond a little decent regularity, in which they will fancy they need not quite come up to us neither. Our sermons, and reading of prayers, they will consider only as matters of form: and finding in us hardly any thing at other times of what we express at these, they will presume, that our inward regard to it is not very great, and that they are not bound to have more. Therefore if they are pleased with us, if they esteem us, while we continue to be of this turn, it must be for something foreign from our office, something of a middle, or it may be a blamable nature, not as teachers of the Gospel: a character which they take us to lay aside as much as we well can. And so the better they think of us, the more lightly they will think of our ministry; till at length they join with those avowed

infidels, who boldly affirm, though often against their own consciences, that we believe not what we preach, else it would have more influence upon us.

Then, at the same time, the right dispositions of well-inclined persons will languish and decay, for want of that countenance and assistance in serious piety, which they should receive from their pastors. For if the tokens of our piety be confined to the church, they will be of little service either out of it, or in it. Or if some good people suffer no harm themselves from our defects, they will see with great sorrow that others do: all of them will be much readier to think the clerical order in general careless and light, if those are so, of whom they see most: their ears will be open to the invectives, which artful or heated men are daily pouring forth against us; they will easily be led to undervalue and misconstrue the best instructions of those, with whom they are disgusted; and run after any teachers, who have the powerful recommendation, for it will always, and no wonder, be a very powerful one, of seeming more in earnest. The irregularities and divisions which have prevailed so lamentably in our church of late, are greatly owing to an opinion, that we are usually indifferent about vital inward religion. It is true, the spreaders of this imputation, which hath been monstrously exaggerated, will have much to answer for: but so shall we also, unless we take the only way to silence it, by cutting off hereafter all occasion for it.

Now the first necessary step to seem good is to be so; for mere pretence will be seen through: and the next is, to *let your light shine before men* *, in the faithful and laborious exercise of your function.

* Matt. v. 16.

Living amongst your parishioners, or as near them as may be; inquiring frequently and personally concerning the welfare and behaviour of those, with whom you cannot be statedly present; reverent and judicious reading of the prayers and lessons in your churches, instructive and affecting sermons delivered with discreet warmth, readiness to take extraordinary pains for the occasional assistance of your brethren, diligence in forming the youth to a sense of their Christian duty, in bringing your people to the holy communion, and, where it can be, to week-day prayers: all these things will tend very much both to your usefulness and your credit. Relieving or obtaining relief for such as are distressed in their circumstances: hearing your people willingly and patiently, though perhaps low in rank or weak in understanding, when they would consult you upon any difficulty, and answering them with consideration and tenderness: disposing them to be visited when sick, praying by them with fervency, exhorting and comforting them with fidelity, compassion, and prudence: and reminding them strongly, yet mildly, after their recovery, of their good thoughts and purposes during their illness; will be further proofs, very beneficial and very engaging ones, of your seriousness: which however you must complete by going through every other office of religion with dignity. I will specify two.

One is that of baptism: which, especially when administered in private houses without necessity, is too often treated, even during the administration, rather as an idle ceremony than a Christian sacrament: or however that be, is commonly close followed by very unsuitable, if not otherwise also indecent, levity and jollity. Now in these circumstances it is

highly requisite, that the minister should, by a due mixture of gravity and judgment, support the solemnity of the ordinance; and either prevent improprieties in the sequel, or if it be doubtful whether he can, excuse himself, with a civil intimation of the unfitness of them, from being present. The other instance is, that of saying grace over our daily food: which many, if not most, of the laity have, with a profaneness more than heathenish, laid aside: and I am sorry to add, that some of the clergy hurry it over so irreverently, in a mutter or a whisper, scarce, if at all, intelligible, that one might question, whether they had not better lay it aside too, which yet God forbid, than make it thus insignificant; and expose to contempt an act of devotion, and themselves along with it, as doing what they are ashamed of.

Indeed far from authorizing any slights of this sort by our example, and as it were our consent, we must through our whole conversation steadily and resolutely, though with mildness and modesty, always keep up the honour of religion and our order, which is inseparable from our own: never speak a word, or use a gesture, which can with the least colour be interpreted, as if we had small regard to our profession, or exercised it chiefly for a maintenance: never repeat, never hear, discourses of an irreligious or immoral turn, without expressing a plain disapprobation, briefly or at large, as the case may require: yet be on all occasions courteous, and on proper occasions cheerful; but let it be evidently the cheerfulness of serious men. *Foolish talking and jesting are not convenient* *, not becoming any person: but those least of all, who should know best, that *every idle word which men shall speak, they shall give an account*

* Ephes. v. 4.

thereof, according to its tendency, *in the day of judgment* *. Unseasonable or excessive mirth sits peculiarly ill upon him whose office must or ought to bring before his mind so frequently, the afflictions of this mortal state, the holiness of God's law, his own grievous imperfections, the deplorable sins of many others, and the final sentence, that awaits us all. Doubtless we should endeavour to make religion agreeable; but not to make ourselves agreeable, by leading our company to forget religion. We should *every one of us please his neighbour for his good* †: but not so *please men*, as to fail in the character of *servants of Christ* ‡. We should be *made*, in a fitting sense and measure, *all things to all men, that we may by all means save some* §: but we shall lose ourselves, not save others, if we are quite different persons in the pulpit and out of it: nor can we act a more incongruous part, than to choose raising and promoting the laugh for our province in conversation, instead of duly restraining our own liveliness and that of others. *For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh* ‖: and our hearts ought to abound with better things. I own, both affected and excessive restraint will do harm. But if we are sincerely pious, and endeavour to be prudent, we shall combine useful informations and reflections with harmless entertainment: our *speech will be with grace, seasoned with salt, that we may know how we ought to answer every man* ¶: we shall prove that we have the end of our ministry constantly in view, by drawing profitable lessons, frequently, but naturally, out of topics of indifference: and bringing back the discourse, if it goes astray, from exceptionable or unsafe subjects, to

* Matt. xii. 36. † Rom. xv. 2. ‡ Gal. i. 10.
§ 1 Cor. ix. 22. ‖ Matt. xii. 34. ¶ Col. iv. 6.

innocent ones; yet if possible without offensive reproof, and perhaps imperceptibly. *For the servant of the Lord must not strive*, that is, roughly and harshly, *but be gentle unto all men* *, even the worst. Yet on the other hand servile obsequiousness, or *flattering words* †, even to the best, are far remote from *having our conversation in simplicity and godly sincerity* ‡.

Talking with great earnestness about worldly affairs, or with great delight about diversions and trifles, betrays a mind overmuch set upon them: and numbers will represent the case, as worse than it is. Nay, our being only in a very peculiar degree good judges of such matters, or of any that are unconnected with our office, will, unless we have some especial call to them, be commonly thought to imply, that we have studied and love them beyond what we ought, to the neglect of our proper business. For we are not to expect very favourable constructions from mankind: yet it greatly imports us to have their good opinion; which we shall not secure, unless, in whatever other lights they may see us occasionally, the worthy clergyman be the predominant part of our character. If practical Christian piety and benevolence and self-government, with constant zeal to promote them all upon earth, are not the first and chief qualities, which your parishioners and acquaintance will ascribe to you; if they will speak of you, as noted on other accounts, but pass over these articles; and when asked about them, be at a loss what to say, excepting possibly that they know no harm of you; all is not right: nor can such a clergy answer the design of its institution any where; or even maintain its ground in a country of freedom

* 2 Tim. ii. 24. † 1 Thess. ii. 5. ‡ 2 Cor. i. 12.

happily they should not otherwise *corrupt* our *good manners**, we may not however grow inwardly fond of them; come to think our profession a dull one, and the calls of it troublesome; throw off as much of the burthen as we can, and perform with reluctance and cold formality the remainder, which we must.

At least it will be suspected, that we cannot greatly disapprove the customs in which we voluntarily join, the persons with whom we familiarly associate, or indeed any thing said or done where we delight to be: that if we do not go the utmost lengths, yet we should, if for shame we durst: for these things are our choice, not the duties of our ministry; which therefore declaimers will say we are not sincere in, or however unfit for. And even they, who plead our example as a precedent for themselves, will usually honour us much the less for setting it.

Still I do not mean that we should be sour and morose; condemn innocent relaxations, and provoke men to say, that we rail out of envy at what we have absurdly tied up ourselves from partaking of: but express our dislike of them as mildly as the case will bear; slight with good humour the indulgences, in which others falsely place their happiness; and convince them by our experience as well as reasoning, how very comfortably they may live without them. It is true, paying court to the gay and inconsiderate by imitation of them, may often be the shorter, and sometimes the surer, way to their favour. But the favour of the fashionable world is not our aim; if it be, we have chosen our profession very unwisely. And though we should succeed thus with such persons in point of interest, we must not hope even for

* 1 Cor. xv. 33.

their esteem. For they will both think and speak with the lowest contempt of the complying wretch, whom yet for their own convenience or humour they will caress, and now and then prefer.

Our predecessors, that their abstaining from indiscreet levities might be notorious, wore constantly the peculiar habit of their order. And certainly we should be more respected, if we followed their example in this more universally. They complained of no inconveniences from it: nor did I ever, in a course of many years, find any worth naming. In the primitive and persecuting times indeed clergymen wore no peculiar dress: and long after were distinguished only by retaining a greater simplicity of garb than others. But gradually superiors discerned reasons for enjoining a different sort: and surely others may well pay them so far the obedience promised to them, as always to shew by some evident and proper marks (for nothing more is expected) of what class of men they are. If you do not, it will be said, either that you are ashamed of your cause, or conscious of your unskilfulness to defend it, or that you conceal yourselves to take occasionally unfit liberties. Indeed some external restraints of this kind, merely as an admonition against unseemly discourse and conduct and company, would, though not prescribed, be very advisable for young clergymen: amongst whom they, who dislike them the most, might sometimes perceive, that they have the most need of them. And we that are older, should keep up the custom for their sakes, though unnecessary for our own. Besides, we may all prevent, by such notification of ourselves, a great deal of unbecoming talk and deportment in others: and so escape both the disagreeableness of reproving it, and the impropriety of not

reproving it. Or if, after all, it cannot be prevented, they who are offended with it, will immediately see in us a refuge from it.

But then a habit, visibly a clergyman's, must be such in every part as befits a clergyman: have no look of effeminacy or love of finery in it*. For we had better put on the lay dress entirely, than disgrace the clerical one. And it is doubly contemptible, first to shew what a fondness we have for things utterly beneath us, and then how poorly we are able to indulge it. Therefore let us be uniform: and as our character is a truly venerable one, let us think we do ourselves honour by wearing the ancient badges of it. I need not add, that our whole demeanor should be answerable to our clothing: that softness and delicacy of manner, skill in the science of eating †, and the perfection of liquors, in short every approach to luxurious gratification, is strangely out of place in one, who hath devoted himself to *endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ* ‡.

Still we ought to judge very charitably of those, who take greater liberties, than we dare; never blame them more, seldom so much as they deserve; and confine our severity to our own practice. Only we must watch with moderate strictness over our families also: not only keeping up the joint separate worship of God in them, which I hope no clergyman omits, but forming them to every part of piety and virtue and prudence. St. Paul requires, that not only *deacons*, but their *wives*, be *grave* §: and that the higher clergy be such, as *rule well their own houses, having their children in subjection with all gravity: for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he*

* Hieron. ad Nepotian. § 9.
† Hieron. ad Nepotian. § 6.
‡ 2 Tim. ii. 3.
§ 1 Tim. iii. 8. 11.

*take care of the church of God**? Whence we have all promised at our ordination, to *frame and fashion our families* together with ourselves, *according to the doctrine of Christ, and to make them, as much as in us lieth, wholesome examples and patterns to his flock.* They are naturally the first objects of our care: we have peculiar opportunities of instructing and restraining them. If we neglect them, we shall never be thought to have much concern for others: if we are unsuccessful with them, we shall be deemed very unskilful; and bid to look at home before we reprove the rest of our flock. But exhibiting instances of goodness and happiness, produced under our own roofs by the methods, to which we direct those around us, must needs add singular weight to our exhortations.

For the importance of the rules hitherto laid down, we have the judgment of a most able, and subtle, and determined enemy, the Emperor Julian: who designing to re-establish paganism, and accounting, as he declares, the strictness and sanctity, professed by Christians, to be a principal cause of the prevalence of their faith, in two of his epistles gives directions, undoubtedly copied from the injunctions observed by the clergy of those days, that the heathen priests be men of serious tempers and deportment; that they neither utter, nor hear, nor read, nor think of any thing licentious or indecent; that they banish far from them all offensive jests and libertine conversation: be neither expensive nor showish in their apparel; go to no entertainments but such as are made by the worthiest persons; frequent no taverns; appear but seldom in places of concourse; never be seen at the public games and spectacles; and take

* 1 Tim. v. 4, 5.

care that their wives and children and servants be pious, as well as themselves *. Let not, I entreat you, this apostate put us to shame.

But clergymen, who are serious in their whole behaviour, and the care of their families also, are often too unactive amongst their people: apt to think, that if they perform regularly the ordinary offices of the church, exhort from the pulpit such as will come to hear them, and answer the common occasional calls of parochial duty, they have done as much as they need or well can, and so turn themselves to other matters: perhaps never visit some of their parishioners; and with the rest enter only into the same sort of talk, that any one else would do. Now St. Paul saith he *taught* the Ephesians both *publicly and from house to house, testifying repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ* †; and *ceased not to warn every one day and night* ‡. He also commands Timothy to *preach the word,* and *be instant in season and out of season* §; at stated times and others; not forcing advice upon persons, when it was likelier to do harm than good; but prudently improving less favourable opportunities, if no others offered. Thus unquestionably should we do. And a chief reason, why we have so little hold upon our people is, that we converse with them so little, as watchmen over their souls. The pastors of the foreign protestants outdo us greatly in this respect, and are honoured in proportion. The Romish priests have their laity under their hands, on one account or another, almost continually, and acquire by it an absolute dominion over them. Both the old dissenters from our church, and those who are now forming new separations,

* Ep. 49. ad Arsac. p. 430, 431. Fragm. Ep. p. 301—305.
† Acts xx. 20, 21. ‡ Acts xx. 31. § 2 Tim. iv. 2.

discreet references, to proceedings at law: and when the latter become necessary, carry them on in the fairest, the least expensive, the friendliest manner. You will be very tender in your demands upon the poor, and very equitable towards the rich; though you will conscientiously preserve all the material rights, with which you are intrusted, for your successors. If you find room and reason to improve your income, you will do it within bounds: and prove, that no wrong motive induces you to it, by living with decent frugality, providing for your families with moderation, and going as far as ever you are able in acts of good-nature, and especially of pious liberality; which are the most valuable in themselves, the most incumbent on you, and the most overlooked by others. For nothing gives greater or juster offence, than to see a clergyman intent upon hoarding, or luxurious, or splendid, instead of being charitable.

Few indeed of our order have much to spare: and many have cause to wish for a more plentiful subsistence. Yet even these, and much more the better preferred, if they are earnest seekers and importunate solicitors for promotion, lower their characters grievously: and such as use indirect means to obtain it, are often providentially disappointed; or though they succeed, always dishonour themselves, and never do much good to others: whereas the lowest of their brethren will be justly respected, and may be highly useful, if he submits contentedly to God's good providence, and labours to live within the compass of his income; exceeding which, without visible necessity, will bring some imputations even upon him, and deservedly a much heavier on such as enjoy an ampler provision.

However inoffensive we are, we must expect to receive, from time to time, injurious and provoking treatment, as the Scripture hath forewarned us. We shall hurt both our own cause and that of religion dreadfully, if we return it: and do honour to both, if we behave under it calmly, *with* such *meekness of wisdom**, as may tend to bring our adversaries over, if not to our sentiments concerning the matter in question, whatever it be, yet to a good opinion of our meaning and temper; or may at least, if we fail of success with them, engage more impartial persons to countenance and protect us. Indeed we ought, if possible, to keep not only ourselves, but others, out of all angry contests. We solemnly promise at our ordination, to *maintain and set forwards, as much as lieth in us, quietness, peace, and love among all Christian people, and especially among them that are or shall be committed to our charge:* and by so doing, we are bound never to raise or foment personal, family, parochial, political, or ecclesiastical animosities, but do all in our power to compose and extinguish them: nor will any thing conduce more to our credit or to our usefulness. The political party-spirit is, God be thanked, of late years much abated. Let us guard against the return of it: shew, in word and deed, becoming respect, as we have great cause, to our excellent king, and all who are put in authority under him: *not exercise ourselves in matters too high for us* †, but *be quiet and do our own business* ‡; *let our moderation*, even where we are concerned to meddle, *be known to all men* §; exercising it even to those who have least of it; and always remember, that neither patriot love to our earthly country, nor loyal attach-

* James iii. 13.
† Psalm cxxxi. 2.
‡ 1 Thess. iv. 11.
§ Phil. iv. 4.

ment to our earthly sovereign, will be accepted by our heavenly Father, without uniform obedience to the whole of his Gospel.

Another point of great importance to clergymen is, that they be studious. This will keep your money from being spent unwisely; and likewise your time from being thrown away hurtfully or unprofitably, or hanging heavy on your hands. It will procure you reverence too, as persons of knowledge: whereas the idle will, even by the ignorant, be thought deficient. And, which is the main thing, this alone will enable you to understand the business of your station, and perform it well. But then you must apply to such things chiefly, as will fit you most to answer the great end of your employment; and *determine* with St. Paul *to know nothing*, comparatively speaking, *amongst* your people, *save Christ Jesus and him crucified**. The concern of a parish minister is, to make the lowest of his congregation apprehend the doctrine of salvation by repentance, faith, and obedience; and to labour, that when they know the way of life, they may walk in it. If he doth not these things for them, he doth nothing: and it requires much consideration to find out the proper methods of doing them, and much pains and patience to try one after another. Smooth discourses, composed partly in fine words which they do not understand, partly in flowing sentences which they cannot follow to the end: containing little that awakens their drowsy attention, little that enforces on them plainly and home what they must do to be saved; leave them as ignorant and unreformed as ever, and only lull them into a fatal security. Therefore bring yourselves down to their level; for what suits the

* 1 Cor. ii. 2.

they are strangers: though it may be useful to obviate them briefly, and if possible, without naming them. But as, probably enough, some of you will at one time or another in company meet with such persons, or hear of their talk, I would give you a few directions in relation to them.

If any of them are virtuous in their conduct, and backward to offend in discourse, they should not be unseasonably provoked, but treated with respect. If any of them build their unbelief on serious argument, which plainly very few do, they should be directed to the books, or the learned men, that are best fitted to answer them: and the less able should prepare for combat with them, but not engage too far in it prematurely. If they cannot at present be convinced of the falsehood of their tenets, they should be shewn however, in a gentle manner, the pernicious effects of promulging them. But if they will obstinately persist to sacrifice every thing valuable amongst men to their own vices, or their own vanity, we must openly withstand them, and warn others against them. Yet even this ought to be done, without passion or bitterness, otherwise all the blame will be laid on us: especially without personal incivilities, even to the worst of them, else they will become still worse than they were. But then we must never assist the very best of them in gaining influence and growing dangerous; nor bring our own sincerity into question by intimacies with them, which they will usually represent, and sometimes believe, to proceed from our inwardly thinking as they do. Much less should we ever c o descend to the shocking meanness of paying court for private ends, either to them, or to wicked wretches of any kind, though not infidels: but connect ourselves with worthy persons; engage their

such, and fixing them with us. Nay, supposing any persons irrecoverably gone, we should not be hasty to condemn, even in our thoughts, either them or their party, as enthusiasts or hypocrites: *whatsoever they are, it maketh no matter to us* *. And much less ought we to say of either worse than we are sure they deserve. When we are undoubtedly well informed of any extravagant things, which they have asserted or done, it may be useful to speak strongly of them: but not with anger and exaggeration; which will only give them a handle to censure our uncharitableness, and confute us: but with deep concern, that when so few persons express any zeal for the Gospel, so many of those, who do, run into extremes, that hurt its interests. Nor will ridicule become our character, or serve our cause better than invective. It may please those very highly, who are in no danger of being proselyted by them. But what shall we get by that? Persons negligent of religion will at the same time be confirmed in their negligence; and think, that all they need to avoid is being *righteous over much* †. Tender minds will be grieved and wounded by such ill-placed levity: and crafty declaimers will rail at us with success, as *scoffers* ‡, *denying the power of godliness* §. But if we let fall any light expressions, that can be wrested into a seeming disrespect of any Scripture doctrine or phrase, we shall give our adversaries unspeakable advantages: and they have shewn, that they will use them without mercy or equity. Therefore we must guard every word, that we utter, against misrepresentations; be sure to express, in public and private, our firm belief of whatever evangelical truths border upon their mistakes; and certainly be as vigilant over our behaviour, as our teaching: encourage

* Gal. ii. 6. † Eccl. vii. 16. ‡ 2 Pet. iii. 3. § 2 Tim. ii. 15.

of you, brethren, that ye are full of goodness, replenished with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. Nevertheless, if I may presume to adopt, with due abatements, the subsequent words also, *I have* spoken *somewhat boldly unto you in part, as putting you in mind, because of the grace which is given you of God, that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to you**, as you are to your respective congregations. And let us all pray for ourselves and each other daily, that we may so *feed the flock of God which is among us, and be ensamples to it, that when the chief Shepherd shall appear, we may receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away* †.

* Rom. xv. 14, 15, 16. † 1 Pet. v. 2, 3, 4.

will be easier to convince our people, that they may and should learn a great deal from the exhortations, the prayers, the praises, the portions of Scripture, of which our liturgy consists; that therefore, even where there is no other service, they should come to church for the sake of these far more constantly, and attend to them far more carefully, than the generality of them do: indeed should have them in much higher esteem, than the mere products of our private thoughts.

But I shall confine myself to the instructions which you give of your own; speaking of them chiefly with a view of suggesting such advice to the younger part of you, as I hope the elder will approve, and enforce.

And here I must begin with repeating, what I need not enlarge upon, for I have done it already, that the foundation of every thing in our profession is true piety within our breasts, prompting us to excite it in others. Even heathens made it a rule, that an orator, if he would persuade, must be a good man: much more must a preacher. When a bad one utters divine truths, we shut our ears, we feel indignation. Form yourselves therefore thoroughly, by devout meditations and fervent prayer, to seriousness of heart, and zeal for the eternal welfare of souls: for then every thing else, that you are to do, will follow of course.

You will earnestly labour to complete yourselves in all proper knowledge: not merely the introductory kinds, which unhappily are often almost the only ones, taught the candidates for holy orders; but those chiefly, which have a closer connection with your work. And though, amongst these, the science of morals and natural religion is highly to be valued, yet the doctrines and precepts of the Gospel require your principal regard beyond all comparison. It is of the

of others: for indeed I have made no little use of them in what I am saying, and about to say. I would have young clergymen, especially, make very great use of the works of able divines: not inconsiderately and servilely transcribe them; but study, digest, contract, amplify, vary, adapt to their purpose, improve, if possible, what they find in them. For thus it will fairly become their own; mix naturally with what proceeds altogether from themselves; and preserve their youthful productions from the imputation of being empty and jejune. In the choice of such authors you will consult religious and judicious friends, always joining your own experience. Those writers, whom you find the most effectual to enlighten your understandings, convince you of your faults, animate you to good resolutions, and guide and support you in the execution of them, will best help you to produce the same effect on others. These therefore imitate; but with judgment. If, amidst their excellencies, you observe mistakes, defects, redundancies, flights indiscreetly high, despicably familiar condescensions, sallies over vehement: beware of adopting any of them. And remember too that a very close imitation, of singularities above all, will both betray you, and be disgustful.

When you go about to prepare an instruction for your people, first consider carefully of a proper subject and text; begging God to direct your choice, and dispose you to treat them in a proper way. Choosing a text, without need, that will surprise, or seemingly a barren one, to shew what your art can extract from it, will appear ingenious perhaps to some, but vanity to most with good reason. Choosing one, that requires much accommodating to your purpose, is but mis-

have said but little; or in a long one have either said any thing which was not pertinent, or dwelt upon any thing beyond what was needful.

An indispensable point throughout is to preserve attention: for if that be not paid, all your labour is lost. And persons are singularly apt to be inattentive to preachers. Our subjects are, and ought to be, the most common and trite of any. And hence, unless we use a little honest art to prevent it, our people will think, will many of them find indeed, that they know before-hand most of what we shall deliver to them, and so will soon grow weary of minding us. Coming to church, the bulk of mankind, even still, consider as a duty: but hearing as they ought, they partly neglect, and partly experience to be difficult. Therefore we must not only admonish, but assist them. For this end we must shew them from first to last, that we are not merely saying good things in their presence, but directing what we say to them personally, as a matter which concerns them beyond expression. More general discourses they often want skill to take home to themselves; and oftener yet inclination: so they sit all the while stupidly regardless of what is delivered. Therefore we must interest them in it, by calling upon them to observe, by asking them questions to answer silently in their own minds, by every prudent incitement to follow us closely. But then we must make them understand, that in preaching against sin we never preach against such or such a sinner; but mean to amend and improve all, who want it; wishing every one to apply as much as possible of what he hears to his own benefit, but nothing to the reproach of his neighbour.

Still you will press them in vain to pay attention, unless you win them to it by what you have to say.

reason more at large, in the spirit of St. Paul, when he told the Corinthians, *I speak as to wise men: judge ye what I say* *.

You might perhaps give more entertainment, and procure more applause, by disregarding some of these directions. But your business is, not to please or be admired, but to do good: to make men think, not of your abilities, attainments, or eloquence, but of the state of their own souls; and to fix them in the belief and practice of what will render them happy now and to eternity. For this purpose (observe further) it will by no means suffice to teach them outward regularity and decency; and let them fancy they have religion enough, when they come to church pretty constantly, and live as well as their neighbours: though, in some respects, ill, and, scarce in any, well, from a principle of conscience. Or be they from a sense of duty ever so honest, and sober, and chaste and beneficent; another indispensable part of morals is the discipline of the inward man. An affectionate piety is full as necessary, as morals can be: and Gospel piety no less than natural.

Here then lay your foundation: and set before your people the lamentable condition of fallen man, the numerous actual sins, by which they have made it worse, the redemption wrought out for them by Jesus Christ, the nature and importance of true faith in him, their absolute need of the grace of the divine Spirit in order to obey his precepts. This will be addressing yourselves to them as Christian ministers ought to Christian hearers. The holy Scriptures will furnish you with matter for it abundantly. Short and plain reasonings, founded on their authority, will dart conviction into every mind: whereas if your

* 1 Cor. x. 15.

that you could shew them, and why you do not. Therefore enter but little, if at all, into matters about which your hearers are not likely to err, at least dangerously. Yet suffer not either the evidence or the fundamentals of Christianity, or the honour of the protestant religion, or of the established church, to want a due support, when you are any way called to the defence of them. At such times, demonstrate your zeal; but be sure to do it with a Christian temper; *in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves* *: at others, avoid a controversial manner, and confine yourselves to brief instructions on these heads.

It may possibly sometimes be necessary in our sermons to vindicate our rights, and *magnify our office* †. But this must be done very sparingly and cautiously; so as to cut off all pretence, that we *take the oversight of God's flock*, either *for filthy lucre*, or from a desire of *being lords over his heritage* ‡. We must never set up an undue, never a suspicious claim: but confess, that the *treasure* of the Gospel is committed to us entirely for the sake of others, not our own; and that *we have it in earthen vessels* §; are liable to continual imperfections and frailties. Such humility is no less our wisdom, than our duty. For that clergyman will always acquire the greatest respect, who shews the most care to deserve it, and the least eagerness to demand it.

Every part of your discourses must preserve the gravity and the earnestness, which is inseparable from subjects of a religious nature. If you can speak of these lightly and negligently, your auditors will suspect you have little concern about them: they of

* 2 Tim. ii. 25.
† Rom. xi. 13.
‡ 1 Pet. v. 2, 3.
§ 2 Cor. iv. 7.

prayer, *grace to help in time of need**: not strictly confining their devotions to any forms, though forms are very useful, but varying them according to their spiritual condition. These are the things, on which you must insist with your whole force: *not as pleasing men, but God which trieth our hearts*†.

Yet, while you take without reserve all requisite freedom, you must also take care not to provoke, instead of reforming them; but shew, that you sincerely wish well to them; and think as well of them as you can: you must praise them when you have opportunity; give them cautions oftener than reproofs, and never reprove harshly; but express a fatherly concern, rather than anger at their faults. Represent no fault as worse than it is: and carry no injunction to an extravagant height. If you do, they will either think you unreasonable, or themselves incapable of becoming good; or will run into some absurdity by attempting it. And for their encouragement, along with the duties, lay before them, in a strong light, the comforts also, present and future, of religion.

It is but too possible, that sometimes you must excite your people to virtues, in which you are, more or less, deficient yourselves. For it would be heinous unfaithfulness to omit or explain away necessary precepts because you are imperfect in the practice of them. And lamentable is our case, if there be any Christian obligation, on which we dare not for shame speak freely: yet still worse, if we harden our consciences, till we venture boldly to enjoin what we habitually transgress. For in that case, not only our credit will be utterly lost, but our amendment almost absolutely hopeless. Therefore correct your own hearts and lives in the first place by the discourses

* Heb. iv. 16. † 1 Thess. ii. 4.

to continue, bad effects may as possibly follow as good: whereas warmth of affection, excited to a proper degree by the rational enforcement of solid arguments, promises to be durable, and will never do harm. The faculty of moving hearers thus, is a most valuable blessing. And such as have but little of it, may considerably improve it, by labouring to affect themselves deeply with what they would say; and thinking, what methods of saying it will be most persuasive. But they must not attempt to force an unwilling genius too far. If they do, what it produces will be so ungraceful and unsuccessful, that they had much better content themselves to do as well as they can in their own way.

Your delivery must in the first place be such, that you can be heard; else you preach in vain: besides that speaking too low argues indolence and indifference; whereas an audible exertion is a mark of earnestness: and the common people are peculiarly pleased, when their minister appears to take pains about them. But then you must neither be precipitately quick, (for if your words be understood, your meaning will not) nor tediously slow; nor sink any one part of your sentence under its proper level, especially the concluding part. Distinctness will do much to supply want of strength in speaking: which however it is very material that you should try to remedy gradually, as many have done, by a prudent exercise of your voice. Yet straining beyond your due pitch will give your hearers pain, make you in some degree inarticulate, and produce a singing sort of cadence and tone. This last indeed hath been sometime known to please weak persons: but it cannot possibly make them either wiser or better: and it offends the judicious extremely. Many learn in their

both absolutely prevents emotion, and soon deadens attention. It is worst indeed, when uniformly unnatural, by degenerating into a kind of chant. But merely to be uniformly inexpressive, be it through heaviness, or effeminacy, or insignificant lightness, is either very blamable, or, if it cannot be helped, very unhappy. And perhaps, a little even of injudicious variety is better than a wearisome sameness.

In public speaking, persons commonly fall into errors, and sometimes great ones, without perceiving it, though they can observe small ones in others. Therefore you will act prudently in desiring some well-wisher, on whose judgment and frankness you can depend, to advertise you of any thing wrong in the conduct of your voice, or in your action: and you will shew your gratitude and good sense by studying to amend it.

We of this nation are not given to use or to admire much action, either in ordinary discourse, or even in popular harangues. And, were it for this reason only, a preacher should be moderate in it. But besides, in the nature of the thing, you had far better have none, than what is unbecoming, or unmeaning, or unsuitable to what you are saying, or repeated at certain distances, whatever you are saying. Yet somewhat of gesture, appearing to be artless, and regulated by propriety, may be very useful, especially in the warmer parts of exhortation, reproof, or even argument. For to be altogether motionless, when the subject is animating, and our language perhaps vehement, seems an inconsistency; and may raise a doubt, whether we are in earnest. But still defect in action is better than excess. And a great deal cannot well be used by those who read their sermons.

This is one objection against reading them: and

ble, it will tempt them to neglect the improvement of their understandings and their discourses; and to be content with digressing, whenever they are at a loss, from their text and their subject, to any point, on which they can be copious: to utter off hand such crudities, as they could not bear to write down; and think the meanest of extempore effusions good enough for the populace. Now on the contrary, previously studying and writing sermons tends to fill them with well digested and well adapted matter, disposed in right order: especially, if you will carefully revise them every time you preach them; supply deficiencies, blot out repetitions, correct improprieties, guard against misapprehensions, enlighten what is obscure, familiarize what is too high, transpose what is wrongly placed, strengthen the weak parts, animate the languid ones. Your composition needs not be at all the stiffer, but may be the freer, for the pains thus employed upon it. You may frame it purposely to be spoken as if you were not reading it: and by looking it over a few times when you are about to use it, you may deliver it almost without being observed to read it. The more you acquire of this art, the more you will be liked, and the stronger impression you will make. But after all, *every man*, as the Apostle saith on a different occasion, *hath his proper gift of God; one after this manner, another after that* *: let each cultivate his own; and no one censure or despise his brother. There is a middle way, used by our predecessors, of setting down, in short notes, the method and principal heads, and enlarging on them in such words as present themselves at the time. Perhaps, duly managed, this would be the best. That which is, or lately was, common amongst foreign divines, of

* 1 Cor. vii. 7.

must always perplex persons, and may often deliver them over a prey to infidels, you may occasionally remove one and another; meddling with none, but such as you can overcome: and from your success in these you may observe to your auditors the probability, that others are capable of solutions also. Perhaps they will forget your solution: but they will remember that they heard one, and may have it repeated to them, if they please. By these means you will teach your people, what is grievously wanting in the present age, to value their Bibles more, and understand them better: and to read them both with pleasure and profit, drawing from them useful inferences and observations, as they have heard you do. Formerly courses of lectures on whole books of Scripture were customary in churches; and they were doubtless extremely beneficial. It would not be easy, if possible, to revive these now: but the practice, which I have been proposing to you, is some approach towards them.

I would also advise you to instruct your parishioners, amongst other things, from some proper text or texts, in the daily and occasional services of the church: not with a view to extol either immoderately, much less to provoke wrath against those who dissent from us: but mildly to answer unjust imputations upon our liturgy, and chiefly to shew the meaning, the reasons, the uses of each part; that your congregations may, as the Apostle expresses it, *pray with the understanding* *. In all compositions, there will be some things, which to some persons want explaining: and, were the whole ever so clear, men are strangely apt both to hear and to speak words, that are become familiar to them,

* 1 Cor. xiv. 15.

" Is this adapted sufficiently to the capacities, the " state of mind, the circumstances of the poor people " who are to hear it? will this part be clear, that " home enough, a third well guarded against mis- " takes? will they go back as much better disposed " than they came, as it is in our power to make " them?" Perhaps one or more ways of representing a necessary doctrine or duty have failed. We must think, whether a more likely may not be found, or a less likely in appearance prove more successful.

If you have preached a considerable time in a place, and done little or no good: there must in all probability, be some fault, not only in your hearers, but in you or your sermons. *For the word of God,* when duly dispensed, is to this day, as it was originally, *powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword**. Inquire then, where the fault may be. Never despair, nor be immoderately grieved, if your success be small: but be not indifferent about it: do not content yourselves with the ignorant plea, that you have done your duty, and are not answerable for the event. You may have done it as far as the law requires: yet by no means have discharged your consciences. You may have done it conscientiously, yet not with the diligence or the address that you ought. And as we are seldom easy in other cases, when we fail of our end; if we are so in this, it doth not look well. At least consult your hearts upon the point. And if you have been deficient, beg of God pardon, grace and direction; endeavour to do more for your people; consult your brethren about the means. Conversation of this nature will much better become clergymen when they meet, than any which is not relative to

* Heb. iv. 12.

iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand. But if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, he shall die in his iniquity, but thou hast delivered thy soul *.

* Ezek. iii. 17, 18, 19. xxxiii. 7, 8, 9.

that grace of God, which alone can *make you able ministers of the New Testament* *.

Nothing is better fitted to assist you in this good work, than the office of ordination, of deacons or priests, as you are respectively concerned. You must certainly have read it over, before you offered yourselves. Since that you have been directed to read it again. But I desire you to peruse it once more this afternoon with your best attention, that you may join in it to-morrow with a greater degree of rational seriousness; and particularly, that you may answer, on more deliberate consideration, the questions, which will then be put to you. For there can hardly be a case, in which either insincerity, or even thoughtlessness, would carry in it heavier guilt.

And that you may be in no perplexity concerning the meaning or fitness of any part of the office, it may be useful to go through some parts of it along with you beforehand, proceeding as they lie in the book.

The first thing, which candidates, both for deacons' and priests' orders, after they are presented, are required to do, as distinct from the rest of the congregation, is to take the oaths of allegiance, and supremacy. For as you are to be ministers of the church established by law in this nation, it is evidently reasonable, that the civil government, established by law, should be assured of the fidelity and affection of persons to whom it gives and secures privileges and profits; and who are intrusted with the care, amongst other matters, of making men good subjects. Now these oaths bind every person, who takes them, to *honour the king* †, and by consequence all that are put in authority under him, both in word

* 2 Cor. iii. 6. † 1 Pet. ii. 17.

it is not said, *Do you feel;* have you an immediate perception of such an impulse from the Holy Ghost, as you can distinguish from all other inward movements by its manner of impressing you? but, *Do you trust;* are you on good grounds persuaded? What then are the proper grounds of such persuasion?

In the first place, if he hath not moved you effectually to live *soberly, righteously, and godly**, you may be sure he hath not moved you to assume the office of a minister in God's church. Examine yourselves therefore strictly on this point: a most important one to all men: but to you, if possible, above all: and before you presume to officiate in this house, ask your hearts, Do you transgress, do you omit, no duty, wilfully or knowingly? Have you a genuine practical faith in Christ? Are you, on the terms of the Gospel covenant, entitled to everlasting life? But supposing that you are, more is requisite in the present case: and what more, the latter part of the question points out: *To serve God, for the promoting of his glory, and the edifying of his church.* This then being the design of the office; if, so far as you know your own hearts, this is your motive to desire it; and if, so far as you can judge of your own abilities and attainments, they are equal to it in some competent degree: then you may safely answer, that *you trust you are moved by the Holy Ghost to take it upon you.* For *we* can *have such trust to God-ward* only *through Christ,* who hath sent us the Spirit: *we are not sufficient to* do or *think any thing as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is of God*†. Together with this principal motive, of *serving God* by *edifying his people,* you may allowably have the subordinate one, of providing a decent maintenance for your own support, and for

* Tit. ii. 12. † 2 Cor. iii. 4, 5.

passage of Scripture plainly was intended to set forth only the immediate and urgent reason of ordaining them, not the whole of what was, then or soon after, given them in charge. For we find in the same book, that Philip the deacon both preached and baptized *. And the qualifications, required in deacons by St. Paul †, intimate very clearly, that more things must, even then, have been incumbent upon them, than administering to the relief of the poor. Accordingly, from the primitive ages downwards, they are described as performing occasionally most of the same offices, which they do now; and being, what their name denotes, assistant and subservient to priests in all proper employments ‡. And the less they are engaged in their chief original one, the more opportunity and the more need they have, to shew diligence in the other good works, belonging or suited peculiarly to their station.

The next question is common to candidates for each order: *Will you fashion your own lives, and those of your families, so far as in you lieth, to be wholesome examples to the flock of Christ?* This extends to avoiding in your own behaviour, and restraining in theirs, follies, levities, mean and disreputable actions, as well as crimes and vices. The Apostle enjoins *deacons and their wives to be grave* §: much more then ought priests. He enjoins every Christian to *abstain from all appearance of evil* ‖. And our blessed Lord enjoins all his disciples to *be wise*, as well as *harmless* ¶. Therefore govern yourselves and yours by these rules: and consider frequently, whether you observe them

* Acts viii. 5—13. 26—40.
† 1 Tim. iii. 8—13.
‡ See Bingham's Orig. Eccl. l. 2. c. 20.
§ 1 Tim. iii. 8. 11.
‖ 1 Thess. v. 22.
¶ Matt. x. 16.

well. For without it you will neither gain esteem, nor do good.

The last question, put alike to the whole number of candidates, is, *Will you reverently obey your ordinary, and them to whom the government over you is committed?* You would be bound to this, though you were not to promise it: for both reason and Scripture demand it. Still more firmly you will be bound, when you have promised it, though it were of small importance. But it is of very great, not only to the dignity and ease of your superiors, but to your own interest, and the benefit of the whole church. Our Saviour both commands, and prayed for unity amongst his followers in the most expressive terms *. Without union there cannot be a sufficient degree either of strength or beauty: and without subordination there cannot long be union. Therefore *obey*, as the Apostle directs, *them that have the rule over you* †; and promote their honour, their credit, their influence. This will make us abler to serve the cause of religion, and protect you. And God forbid that, so far as we are able, we should ever fail to be willing and zealous.

In the office for the ordination of priests, after a pious and awful charge, which I recommend to your most serious attention, follow several questions of the greatest moment, your answers to which, I hope, you will remember to the last day of your lives. In these answers, besides what hath been already mentioned, you promise, that *the doctrine and discipline of Christ, as contained in Scripture, and received in this church and realm,* shall be the standard of your teaching and acting; and every thing contrary to them be faithfully opposed by you: that you will *use*

* John xiii. 34. 35. xvii. 11, 12. 21, 22, 23. † Heb. xiii. 17.

both public and private monitions and exhortations, as well to the sick as the whole, within your cures; and that, as frequently and fully *as need shall require, and occasion be given.* You promise also, that *you will be diligent in prayers and reading the Holy Scriptures:* which by the preceding exhortation evidently appears to mean, private prayer and reading; *and in such studies, as help to the knowledge of Scripture; laying aside the study of the world and the flesh:* that is, not making, either gross pleasures, or more refined amusements, even literary ones unconnected with your profession, or power, or profit, or advancement, or applause, your great aim in life; but labouring chiefly to qualify yourselves for doing good to the souls of men, and applying carefully to that purpose whatever qualifications you attain. Further yet, you promise that *you will maintain and set forwards, as much as lieth in you, quietness, peace, and love, among all Christian people; and especially among them, that are or shall be committed to your charge.* By this you oblige yourselves, never to raise or promote personal, family, parochial, ecclesiastical, political, or any other, animosities; but to discourage, and, if possible, compose and extinguish them; than which you cannot perform a more Christian part, or one more conducive to your honour and your usefulness.

But, besides pondering well beforehand these answers, which you are to make, I earnestly beg you, to read and think them over often afterwards: and particularly, at each return of the Ember weeks to examine yourselves, as in the presence of God, whether you have made good the engagement, into which you entered at your ordination. So far as you have, this practice will afford you the greatest possible

comfort: so far as you may have failed, it will suggest to you the most useful admonition.

After these questions, a short silence is appointed to be kept for the secret prayers of the congregation, that God would enable and incline you to do what you have undertaken: which blessing, I hope, you will ask at the same time for yourselves very earnestly. Then follows a hymn of considerable antiquity: and to be repeated with much reverence, on account of the important petitions and doctrines comprised in it, though it be altogether void of ornament in that old translation, which we still retain. Next to this, follows a very proper address to the throne of grace, pronounced by the bishop alone, in the name of the whole assembly: which is instantly succeeded by the act of ordination.

The first words of that, *Receive the Holy Ghost*, were used by our Saviour to his Apostles, immediately after he had said, *As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you**. *God gave not the Spirit by measure unto him*†: and he was able to bestow what measure he pleased, both of spiritual gifts and graces, upon others. He meant however by this benediction to confer only the ordinary ones: for the extraordinary, you know, were reserved till after his ascension. Far be it from the bishops of his church to claim, even in respect of the former, the powers which he had. But still these words in our mouths, when spoken over you, properly express, in the first place, the communication of that authority, which proceeds from the Holy Ghost. For we read, that *the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work, whereunto I have called them*‡: and that the latter of these exhorted the elders of the church of

* John xx. 21, 22. † John iii. 34. ‡ Acts xiii. 2.

Ephesus, *Take heed of the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers* *. They also express, in the second place, our earnest request to the Father of mercies, that you may at all times enjoy such proportions, both of the graces and gifts of the Spirit, as will be needful for you: which request, if it be not your own fault, will prove effectual; because having, in the common course of his providence, appointed us, though unworthy, to act in this behalf, he will assuredly be ready to own and bless our ministrations.

It follows very soon: *whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven: and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained.* These again are the words of Christ to his Apostles, immediately after the former. But he did not grant to them the power, either of retaining the sins of penitent persons, or of forgiving the impenitent. Nor do we pretend to grant, by uttering them, all the powers, which the Apostles had in this respect. They had *the discernment of spirits* †: and could say with certainty, when persons were penitent, and consequently forgiven, and when not ‡. They were able also to inflict miraculous punishments on offenders; and to remove, on their repentance, the punishments which had been inflicted. These words will convey nothing of all this to you. But still, when we use them, they give you, first, an assurance, that according to the terms of that Gospel, which you are to preach, men shall be pardoned or condemned: secondly, a right of inflicting ecclesiastical censures for a shorter or longer time, and of taking them off; which, in regard to external communion, is retaining or forgiving offences. This power, being bestowed for the edification of the

* Acts xx. 28. † 1 Cor. xii. 10. ‡ Acts viii. 21. 23.

church, must be restrained, not only by general rules of order, but according to the particular exigencies of circumstances. And our church wishes, with much reason, for circumstances more favourable to the exertion of it *. But how little soever exerted, the power is inherent in the office of priesthood. And though we are no more infallible in our proceedings and sentences, than temporal judges are in theirs; yet our acts, as well as theirs, are to be respected, as done by competent authority. And if they are done on good grounds also, *whatever we shall bind or loose on earth, will be bound or loosed in heaven* †. Nor will other proofs of repentance be sufficient in the sight of God, if submission to the discipline of the church of Christ, when it hath been offended, and requires due satisfaction, be obstinately refused, either from haughtiness or negligence.

To these words is subjoined the concluding charge: *and be thou a faithful dispenser of the word of God, and of his holy sacraments.* This then is the stewardship committed to you. And you cannot but see, in what a profane and corrupt age it is committed to you: how grievously religion, and its ministers, are hated or despised; how lamentably both they, and its other professors, are degenerated and divided. Your business will be, each within the sphere of his influence, to prevent these things from growing worse; which, bad as they are, they still may; and, if possible, to make them better; or at least, to recover or preserve such, as you can, from the general depravity. But you will never succeed in your attempts for this purpose, either by bitterness against infidels, heretics, and sectaries, or by contempt and ridicule of enthusiastic or superstitious persons. The

* Office of Commination. † Matth. xviii. 18.

only right method is a very different one: diligent study, to fit yourselves more completely for teaching and vindicating the truths of Christianity: scriptural and rational instruction, assiduously given, with zeal and mildness duly tempered, and suited to the capacities and condition of your hearers: a willing and devout and affecting performance of all sacred rites, whether in the church or elsewhere: but above all, a behaviour, innocent, humble, peaceable, disinterested, beneficent, abstemious, discreet, religious.

Take heed therefore to your steps: and walk in the present evil days with such piety and caution, that, as the office exhorts, *you may neither offend, nor be occasion that others offend;* but may *cut off occasion from them which desire occasion* * against you; *that they who are of the contrary part, and falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ, may be ashamed* † of themselves; or however, that your Master and Judge may not *be ashamed of you* ‡ at the great day, but pronounce over each of you, *Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord* §.

* 2 Cor. xi. 12. † Tit. ii. 8. 1 Pet. iii. 16.
‡ Mark viii. 38. Luke ix. 26. § Matth. xxv. 21.

sermone : Deum orans ut quod e pectore meo proveniet in vestra descendat, et fructum ferat. Neque enim plausum, ne vestrum quidem, capto ; de hoc unice sollicitus, ut aliquid, si possum, proferam, quo sapientiores et meliores utrinque evadamus, et servi fideles utilesque Domini nostri Jesu Christi inveniamur in supremo illo die.

Convenimus, Patres Fratresque, in id parati, ut opem feramus veræ religioni, bonisque moribus, modo quidpiam ejusmodi nobis demandetur. Quod cum jam diu non sit factum, rogitant homines procacioris ingenii, quorsum huc ridenda solennitate, sic enim interpretantur, congregamur, quibus nihil negotii datum est, nec etiam dabitur. Sinite quæso, ut huic petulantiæ, nimium grassanti, pauca prius reponam, quam ad alia progrediar.

Illudne ergo spernendum existimant, quod hæc sacra Synodus eodem antiquissimo jure constituta est, quo comitia procerum et eorum qui plebis vicem gerunt; quodque optimi Principis jussu acciti, comparemus ? Reverebuntur, qui recta sapiunt, utramque partem, tam ecclesiasticam quam civilem, reipublicæ Britannicæ, nec vel unum lapidem, præsertim qui fundamenta contingat, ex venerando ædificio dimotum cupient, ne totius molis, ut superiore sæculo, ruina consequatur Multa fecit hic cœtus in redintegranda puriori fide cultuque, reipublicæ cumprimis utilia: hoc solo meritus, ut semper in posterum honorifice convocaretur. Quæ porro sit facturus, vel nunc vel posthac, quandocunque concessa fuerit aliquid agendi facultas, in pejus præjudicari non debet: neque paulo modestiores negaturos putem, quin ab eo non pauca in commune bonum fieri possent, et a nobis fierent lubenter. Quid quod et interim orientur ab hoc consessu commoda non mediocria ? Videbunt

cives nostri in eum intuentes, quinam simus, qui ecclesiæ Anglicanæ, Episcopi, Decani, Archidiaconi, præsidemus; qualesque sibi delegerit Procuratores Clerus parochialis: unde fore confidimus, ut nihil sibi a nobis extimescendum esse autument, sed omnia quæ bona sunt speranda. Congregati preces coram Deo fudimus concorditer: quas quin ille, promissi memor, clementer acceperit, nefas est dubitare. Hortationi interfuistis, pietate pariter ac prudentia summa refertæ, quæ etsi multorum aures recitata prætervolaverit, omnium animos lecta inflammabit. Consilia etiam saluberrima præsentes invicem pro re nata communicabimus. Licebit denique Regem uno ore suppliciter compellare; nostram in illum fidem et observantiam, in religionem, virtutem, legitimam libertatem, cum civilem tum ecclesiasticam, studium testari; eoque efficere, ut etiamsi natura atque institutione nunquam non fuerit præconibus veritatis propitius, fiat tamen indies benignior, et spretis male feriatorum hominum cavillationibus, quicquid vel factu vel creditu indignum est, cohibeat, quantum salva unicuique conscientiæ prærogativa potest; *quæcunque* autem sunt *vera, quæcunque pudica, justa, sancta, amabilia, bonæ famæ* * non solum, ut semper, exemplo, sed monitis privatim, edictis, publice, animose tueatur.

Hæc nihil esse nemo dixerit: satis non esse, ultro fateor. Disquiramus igitur, unde quod deest possit accedere.

Clamabunt extemplo fervidiores, argumentis, obtestationibus, amicorum deprecatione, purpuratorum gratia, omni machina contendendum, ut quæcunque jura Synodis prioribus fuerunt attributa, iisdem armetur et hæc, regio mandato: resuscitandam demum

* Phil. iv. 8.

ejus ope collapsam et emortuam veteris Ecclesiæ disciplinam, atque exercendam strenue; nostra enim nos jam pridem eviluisse inertia. Et hi quidem plerumque religiosi sunt viri, multaque lectione exercitati. Sed parum vident, quid ferant tempora, quove loco simus.

Primum adversarios habemus omnes, non modo qui Deum esse aperte negant, quos omni tempore fuisse paucos arbitror, sed eos etiam qui, ut iste olim, *oratione relinquunt, re tollunt:* et sub recenti latitantes Deistarum nomine, si verum eloqui oportet, Athei sunt. Neque enim numen illud suum bonos remunerari, neque improbos punire credunt: unde nullius foret, momenti, existeret necne. Proinde constant in eo sibi quod nullum ei honorem, vel una vel seorsim, quantum ego quidem inaudiverim, exhibeant; et naturæ, quas vocant, leges iis limitibus quisque circumscribat, qui lubidini suæ optime congruant; eaque forte mutata, confestim aliud sibi juris naturalis corpus effingant, vel exceptiones quasdam futiles in sui gratiam excogitent, ut permissum videatur quicquid arridet. Licentiam interim, quam sibi infinitam asserunt, adeo gravate cum piis communicant, ut a cultu divino quoslibet obvios sannis et convitiis arceant, suos vero nonnunquam interdictionibus minisque; egregii scilicet, immo vero, si creditis, unici, libertatis vindices.

Cum his fere se conjungunt, neque multo sunt nobis æquiores, qui doctrinam Christianam profitentur quidem, sed parvi pendunt, aut erroribus contaminant: item qui dignitati nostræ invident, aut possessionibus inhiant. Quot autem universi sint, quantumque consociati valeant, animus dicere horrescit.

Jam porro, ut de Pontificiis taceam, qui occultis licet nunc dierum odiis, immortalibus tamen, diligen-

opinionum obtrudentur monstra, mille speciosæ, aut ne speciosæ quidem, rerum novandarum formulæ, quædam a malevolis, quædam ab indoctis aut rudibus, quædam etiam a cordatioribus ipsis: et quod hic necessarium, ille exitiabile esse pronunciabit. Hæc omnia si rejicimus oblata, superbum videbitur: si sumimus dijudicanda, in infinitum res abibit: quoquo nos vertamus, gravem offensionem concitabimus; nec tandem fortasse quidquam decernere, aut si decernimus obtinere ut ratum sit, valebimus. Non sum nescius morem antiquitus fuisse sententiarum varietates Synodorum decretis reprimere: sed cum Synodi, sed cum Clerici separatim, pondus haberent, quo nunc plane carent. Nam hodie quidem plurimis ludus est, immo etiam honori sibi ducant, nos petulanter frustrari, quanquam nec oderint, nec metuant: quod longe acrius aggredientur, cum intermissa diu consilia renovari intellexerint.

Dicet quis forsan, Regem salutis publicæ et fidei Christianæ studiosissimum, si minus ultro, saltem admonitum, certe ornaturum nos rerum constituendarum potestate, et adversus improborum machinationes in tuto collocaturum. Et quidem talem ovanti patriæ divinitus contigisse ex imo pectore vobis gratulor; deumque veneror ut possit, quod velle scio, in religionis amorem suos accendere, et ordini nostro debitum honorem conciliare. Sed nec potest omnia, nec inopportuno tempore quidpiam adorietur, nec iis inconsultis, quorum spectata fide et sapientia merito nititur. Jam hi, bene quidem nobis volunt, ut nemo possit melius: sed rerum suarum. hac præsertim tempestate, satagunt; et inde nostris (nam quid apud vos parcam proloqui?) aliquanto minus dedunt se, quam optandum esset. Metuunt nempe, ne si res bellicas ecclesiasticis cumulent, obruantur negotiorum

alieni, vel a Christiana fide, vel ab hierarchia Anglicana. Quinetiam si nullæ lites orirentur, eo certius malignitatem et livorem quorundam exstimularemus. Nam qui maxime dissensionum nos accusant, minime eadem sentire, et bene rem gerere cupiunt.

His de causis, tametsi prorsus arbitrii nostri esset ad negotia capessenda statim convolare, quid prudentiores existimarent, haud dixerim: ego ampliandum censerem.

Quid ergo? Jubeone vos de Synodo actuosa, deque Ecclesiæ statu per eam emendando, desperare? Absit vero. Semper enitendum est, ut antiqui regiminis non modo retineamus formam, sed et vim instauremus, quatenus vel divino, vel humano jure fulcitur. Atque interim manca quodammodo et mutila erit πολιτεία nostra. Hoc tantum caveri velim, ne, quod fieri, vel tuto fieri, nequit, exoptemus; ne audacibus et calidis inceptis faveamus: ne laqueis implicemur, unde expedire nos erit difficile. Hoc tantum commoneo, lentis passibus esse procedendum, cuncta circumspectanda, impedimenta sedulo amolienda, et substernenda diligenter meditatæ structuræ firma fundamenta. Non est igitur oratio mea procrastinantis, eludendi causâ, sed in justum tempus differentis. Erit etiam, bona cum venia vestra, præcipientis quo pacto maturabitur quod avemus.

Permagni ad hoc propositum interest, ut simus ipsi, quosque pascimus greges efficiamus, quantum res patitur, unanimes, potissimum in fide salutari. Sunt enim qui se nostros vocant, nihilo tamen secius multa quæ docemus improbant; speciatim, quæ ad S.S. Trinitatem pertinent, ad redemptionem generis humani, ad illapsum gratiæ cœlestis in mentes fidelium. Jam vero si longius proserpserit error sententiam de his receptam repudiantium; vel si invalescant qui

fuerit frequenter evenire, ut eundem hic respueret, ille amplecteretur, et disceptandis litibus inde oriundis una synodus haud sufficeret.

Esto igitur, idoneos Articulos Fidei in auxilium vocandos: at certe nostros recoquendos, et incudi reddendos, non pauci contendent. Nec diffitemur potuisse quædam aptius enunciari, et adversus tam argutias quam hallucinationes melius muniri. Sed præclare, ut illis temporibus, instructa et composita sunt omnia: egentque hodie tantum explicatione commoda: non vafram et veteratoriam intelligo, sed artis grammaticæ criticæque regulis consonam. Nec leve est periculum, ne qui, integris manentibus articulis, nos ab eorum vera mente descivisse jactitant, ἑτεροδοξίας crimen atrociori longe clamore, tristiorique eventu impingant, si medicas iis manus, tanquam malesanis, adhibeamus.

Et hæc eadem velim sibi in memoriam revocent, qui Liturgiam item recenseri reformarique flagitant. Ornatior quidem, accuratior, plenior, brevior, et potest ea fieri et debet: sed modesta tractatione, sed tranquillis hominum animis; non temerariis, qualia vidimus et videmus, ausis, non inter media dissidia, mutuasque suspiciones.

Verum ut de his statuatur, novam saltem Scripturæ versionem desiderari, plurimis videtur: nempe ut populus Christianus ea luce fruatur, quæ favente Numine oraculis divinis per continuas virorum doctorum vigilias affulsit, hisce 150 annis proxime elapsis, ante quos confecta est Anglica Vulgata. Et quis refragetur honestissimæ petitioni? Sed ad hoc opus post conquisitum undique omnigenæ eruditionis apparatum demum accedendum est; atque in eo versandum summa religione, cautela, industria, cura porro inter multos amicissime conspirantes, per longum tempus,

" sed qui poterit in melius mutari. Fac denique non " posse : Deus vindicabit." Nec idcirco aut flagitiis inquinati, aut sanorum verborum formulæ pertinaciter adversantes, non sunt a cœtu piorum segregandi. Sed in mitiorem partem, tum dictis, tum factis, est propendendum : nec eadem nobis homuncionibus, quæ Apostolis falli nesciis fuit, auctoritas arroganda est. Etenim longe tutius erit sinere ut zizania tamdiu cum tritico succrescant, quam eos ejicere, quos tandem Judex communis, magno cum nostro dedecore, postliminio restituet. Et qui severius agi postulant, imbecillitatis suæ sunt immemores : nec vident quod est apertissimum, hac via periculose concussum, forsan etiam eversum iri, quam stabilitum eunt ecclesiam.

Nec tamen, ut gaudeamus tranquillitate, rerum theologicarum studia sunt remittenda ; sed excitanda ex diuturno quo languent torpore. Non est hæc ætas nostra legendis, præsertim antiquioribus, aut gravioris argumenti, libris, nedum attentæ cogitationi, vel scriptioni operosæ, satis dedita. Olim tractatibus omnium generum, doctrina, judicio, acumine conspicuis, inclaruimus : nunc non exaruit quidem, sed arescit, uberrimus ille laudum fons. Olim contra infideles, Pontificios, oppugnatores quoscunque, summa cum gloria militavimus : quorum venenatis voluminibus, domi forisque affatim editis, nunc parum aut nihil reponimus : unde illis famæ celebritas, et discipulorum multitudo ; nobis opprobrium. Nec utique existimabitur illos, quorum pauci quidquam separatim præstant, multum præstituros in synodum convocatos. Video quid possit obtendi : et sponte fateor, prospiciendum esse, nam concreditum est, nobis qui dicimur Beneficiorum Patroni, ne eruditæ diligentiæ præmia desint. Dandum sane aliquid hac

in re, ut in omnibus, cognationi, honestis ministeriis, precibus amicorum, potentiorum commendationibus, jussa verius vocaverim: sed nullatenus tantum, ut vel mali, vel plane inhabiles, admittantur ad sacra munia, vel neglecti jaceant boni et litterati. Quod utinam plures se exhiberent, qui studiis recte positis, et eorum fructibus in lucem prolatis, omnem nobis excusationem præriperent, si quando in minus merentes largius æquo simus benefici.

Quanto autem quis est vel doctrina ornatior, vel conditione superior, tanto oportebit, hoc potissimum sæculo, ut se gerat submissius. Officii pastoralis dignitatem, in qua constituti sumus, assidue suspicere et tueri debemus: verum si amplificare aggredimur inscite, imminuemus non mediocriter. Neque ecclesiastica, neque civilia, quibus potimur, adjudicare jura, aut licet aut expedit: nam qui illis nosmet ultro exuentes collaudare nos non desinent, exutos ridebunt. Sed si justam auctoritatem conservare volumus, ante omnia cavendum est, ne immodicam vindicemus. Alioquin magis atque magis in angustum coercebimur: et demum exilis illa, quæ restat, umbra regiminis eripietur, summa cum plurimorum aspernatione.

Nec indecore appetentes erimus (modo sapere, et bene audire, atque adhiberi seriis negotiis cordi est) aut dulcis lucelli, aut gradus cujuslibet altioris. Non sunt, experto credite, non sunt tanti vel honores vel reditus amplissimi ecclesiasticis destinati, ut à quopiam enixe cupiantur. Multum habent solicitudinis, non parum forsan invidiæ; vere delectationis nihil, nisi quoties occurrit, occurrit autem raro insignis benefaciendi occasio.

Voluptates, etiam honestiores, parcè usurpare, nec a vituperandis tantummodo, sed à contemnendis vel

parvi faciendis, abstinere se, ad existimationem clericorum interest quam maxime. Si quos è nobis videant laici, potionum et ciborum lautitiis indulgentes, corporis cultui et vestium elegantiæ præter modum addictos, in facetias et risum perpetuo solutos, muliercularum chartis lusoriis continenter inhiantium circulis et sessiunculis permixtos, vel inter quascunque nugas inerti otio fugaces horas disperdentes, nunquam se persuaderi sinent, ut ex frequentissimo talium concilio boni quidpiam proficisci posse sperent: quales tamen si aliquot nostrûm comperiant, cæteros ejusdem esse farinæ libenter sibi fingent.

Sed minime satis erit vitam agere cætera inculpatam, nisi in docendo quoque Evangelio, quod munus est nostrum, parvi et ampli gnaviter elaboremus. Quo effrænatius luxuriantur errores et vitia, quo laxior est ecclesiæ disciplina, quo lenior administratio reipublicæ, eo diligentiorem adhiberi oportet in fide et præceptis Christianis institutionem: et incassum ad industriam hortabimur sacerdotes inferioris ordinis, nisi exemplo præeamus. Potuimus non ita pridem impetrare, ut delinquentes in bonos mores magistratui pœnas darent; ut libri impii et impudici è medio tollerentur: nunc illud ægre conceditur: hoc sciens loquor, neutiquam. Est ideo vel sola vi argumentorum, præsertim in sacris concionibus, obsistendum adversariis, vel cedendum loco. Et cum præter adversarios veteres, novi et domestici nuper ex ipso academiarum nostratium sinu prosiluerent, qui se solos æternæ salutis tramitem commonstrare, nos in perniciem cæcorum more evagari, passim prædicant, curatissime dispiciendum est, ut recto cursu veritatis viam insistamus; horum nec astutiis illecti, nec timore perculsi, nec odio flagrantes: cavendum, ne, si illi sermones suos ad vulgi captum nimis ac-

commodant, ac demittunt, nos hoc nimis dedignemur; ne, si illi sunt justo vehementiores, nos frigidi videamur, et affectuum piorum expertes; ne, si illi efficaciam fidei immoderatè cum maximo fidelium periculo extollunt, nos non minori ingrate eam deprimamus et extenuemus; ne, si illi inania visa et phantasmata pro certis pignoribus remissionis peccatorum habent, nos in genuinum Spiritus Sancti testimonium simus imprudenter contumeliosi.

Egone igitur clerum Anglicanum officii vel male intellecti, vel male præstiti, tecte insimulo? Deus meliora. Quî potest ut vituperem quos diligo et revereor; quorum plurimorum, cum vita functorum tum superstitum, amicitia diu gavisus sum; et exempla mihi quotidie ob oculos pono, ut ad recte vivendum docendumque me erigam et confirmem? Sed vos auditoribus vestris, etiamsi summa laude dignis, monitiones tamen sollicite ingeritis. Nam vel sapientes virgines dormitâsse legimus*: *thesaurum* evangelicum *in vasis fictilibus habemus* †: et difficile est à moribus hodiernis aliquid contagionis et labis non trahere. Ignoscat Pater misericors, quod parœciis primo, deinde diœcesibus mihi ordine commissis, minus intente et perite, quam oportuerat, invigilaverim! Ignoscat pariter, si quid simile cuiquam vestrum contigerit! Illud autem statuamus universi, aucto sollicite studio, compensare pro virili (nunquam enim fiet satis,) quicquid peccavimus: idque eo certe potissimum, ut nos Deo commendemus; partim vero etiam, ut hominibus.

Neque enim ferent in clericis illa, quorum facile sibi invicem dant veniam. Quod si *nobis et doctrinæ*, ex Apostoli præcepto, *attendamus* ‡; nequit fieri, quin gradatim in altum recrescat existimatio nostra;

* Matt. xxv. 5. † 2 Cor. iv. 7. ‡ 1 Tim. iv. 16.

quin perspiciant quotidie clarius quibus rerum habenæ sunt traditæ, quot quantisque in rebus operâ nostrâ uti possunt; quin tandem non modo concedant, verum et reipublicæ causa invitent rogentque, ut quæ ecclesiæ desunt communi consilio suppleamus. Longa quidem est hæc via atque ardua: sed est ad ea quæ volumus, aut velle debemus, unica; et quas fortasse indicabunt alii compendiarias, in salebrosos ducunt et præcipites locos. His artibus floruerunt primorum sæculorum doctores: his iisdem nobis fidendum est: aliarum ope non dabitur in honore esse: vel si maxime daretur, aliarum ope nec inserviremus hominum utilitati, nec æternam vitam consequeremur.

Tarde et cunctanter credo, quicquid faciemus, de nobis honorificè plerique sentient. Iracundæ tamen querimoniæ multum aberit ut proficiant; quorundam animos malevolo gaudio perfundent; alios movebunt, ut quos contemnunt, etiam oderint. Accusati vicissim accusabunt: et coram iniquis judicibus causa nobis erit dicenda. Nec sane proderit vehemens negotiorum civilium tractandorum studium conspiciendum dare. Ferventiorem enim hancce cupiditatem, ad privata spectare emolumenta, non ad communia, perhibebunt suspicaces et maligni, vulgus credet. Quæ nostra sunt ergo rite peragentes, eventum, quem daturus est Deus, tranquille expectemus. Viros bonos colamus, quamvis minime nobiscum in omnibus consentiant: impiis ne socii quidem simus, nedum adulatores; nec tamen temere offensiones demus, sed necessariam reprehensionem in jucunditatem verborum humanitate mitigemus: modicum aliis non inviti permittamus illorum usum, licita modo sint, quæ ipsi non attingimus: ab omni concertatione longissime abhorreamus: injurias et opprobria toleranter patia-

mur: favore, ex quacunque demum parte affulserit utamur modeste. Hoc modo nec novas contrahemus inimicitias, et majorum delicta aut non luemus amplius, aut luemus immeriti.

In utramque idcirco partem parati simus. Rerum sacrarum, et, quotquot aliquo vinculo cum his connexæ sunt, civilium, scientia sic nos instruamus, quasi brevi essemus de quæstionibus gravissimis deliberationes habituri: compositi tamen interim ad summam æquitatem et mansuetudinem, si vel in longissimum diem spes illa prorogetur: qua si penitus frustremur, dolebimus quidem sæculi, male et sibi consulentis, et nobis gratiam referentis, sive iniquitatem sive incogitantiam: hoc vero nostra culpa non obtigisse, toto pectore lætabimur; nec spernendum nihilominus per nos incrementum capiet res Christiana. In Synodo sententiam non dicemus: sed seorsim constanter quod verum atque decens propugnabimus. Canones non condemus: sed *ut* omnes omnia sua ad Canonem Sacri Fœderis exigant, tam verbis quam exemplo suadebimus. Anathematum fulminibus heterodoxes non feriemus: (atque utinam ab odiosis ejusmodi et appellationibus et inceptis temperavissent sibi decessores nostri:) sed *cum modestia*, divino Paulo edicente, *corripiemus eos qui resistunt, ne quando Deus det illis pœnitentiam ad cognoscendam veritatem* *. In clericos vitiis contaminatos aut vecordes non exercebimus communiter censuram: sed ne locum inveniant apud nos, cura privata quantum licet præcavebimus. Libros infames carbone haud notabimus, unde avidius legerentur; sed accurate refellemus. Et quamvis dubio careret, indies imminutam his in oris atque tandem extinctam fore cœlestem Evangelii lucem: illachrymandum

* 2 Tim. ii. 25.

quidem esset popularibus nostris misere pereuntibus; in voluntate tamen divina non gravatim acquiescendum. Quid enim Propheta? *In vacuum laboravi, et vane fortitudinem meam consumpsi: ergo judicium meum cum Domino, et opus meum cum Deo meo* *.

Condonate mihi, Patres Fratresque, longi hujus alloquii tædium; ex hac Cathedra nunc primum, nunc itidem postremum, (sic enim præsagit mens, et verisimile est) vos compellanti. *Tuque, omnipotens et sempiterne Deus, cujus Spiritu universum ecclesiæ corpus regitur sanctumque efficitur, supplicationes et preces nostras, pro cujuscunque ordinis hominibus, qui in ecclesiam tuam cooptantur, oblatas tibi admitte; ut quisque, sicut suæ convenit vocationi et ministerio, tibi sincere et pie serviat, per Dominum et servatorem nostrum Jesum Christum.* Amen †.

* Esai. xlix. 4. † Collect. 2 Parascev.

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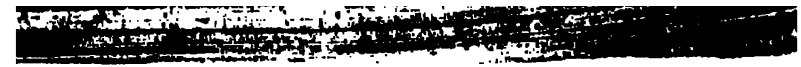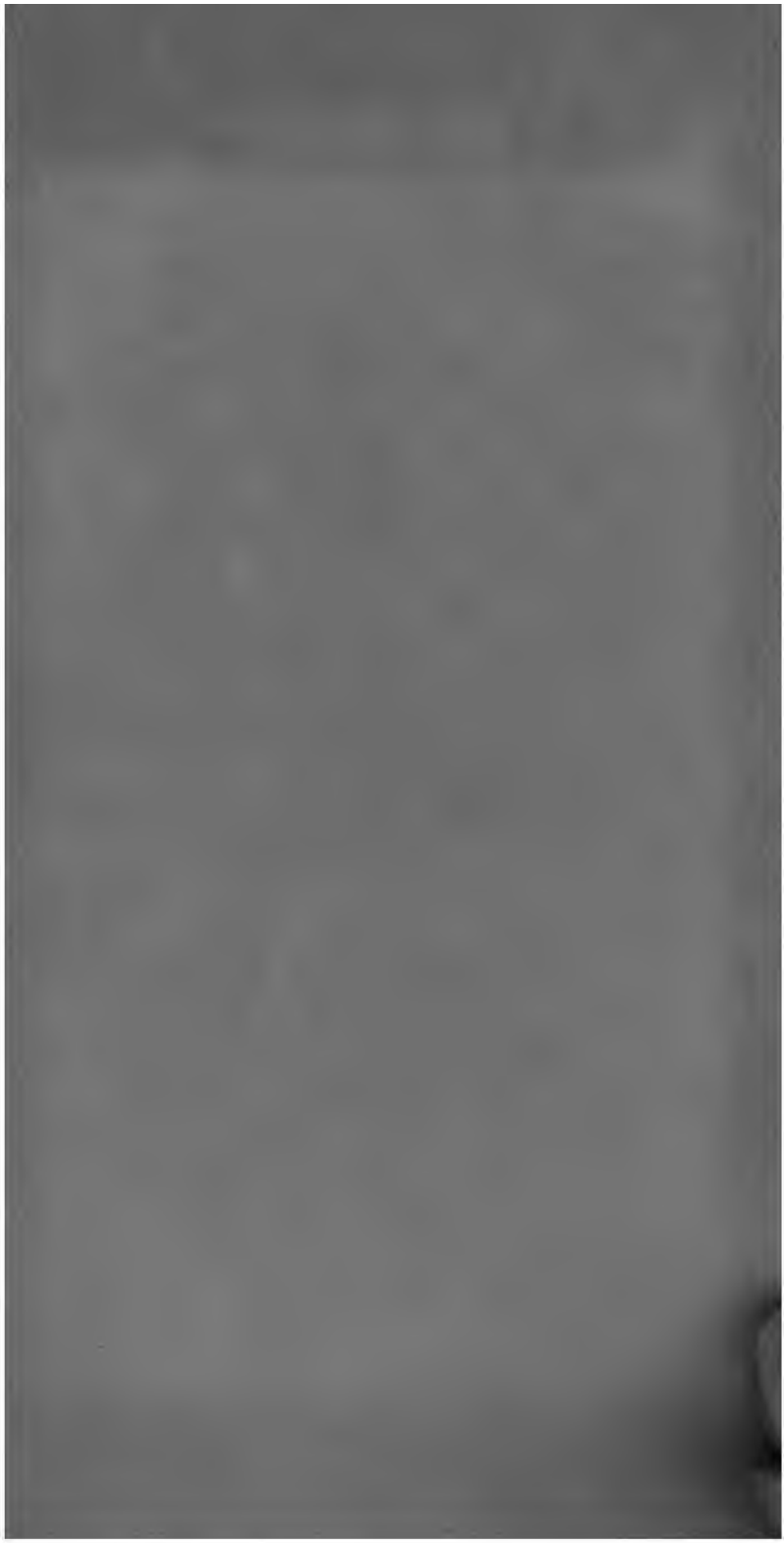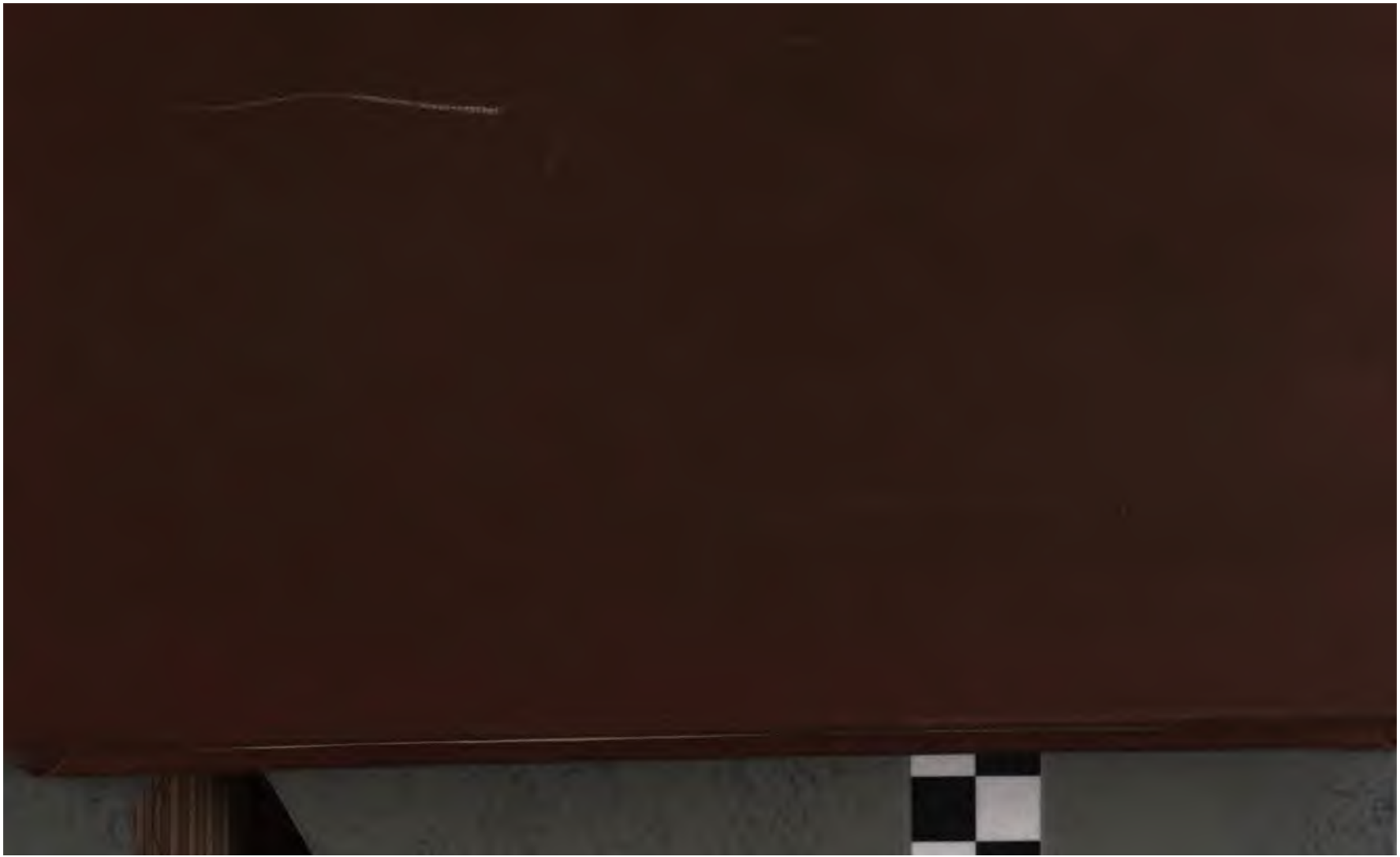
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